

















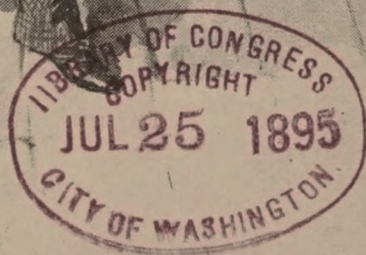
# Holdenhurst Hall

By Walter Bloomfield.

ILLUSTRATED BY WARREN B. DAVIS.



THE  
CHOICE  
SERIES  
No. 126.



ERNEST LANDING FROM THE STEAMER IN NEW YORK.



A New York Novel.

---

# The Meredith Marriage.

BY

Harold Payne,

*Author of "A Queen of Finesse."*

With Illustrations by Warren B. Davis.

12mo. 277 Pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.00.  
Paper Cover, 50 Cents.

---

This novel of the exciting scenes and incidents of city life exhibits many interesting and original qualities which will be appreciated by all novel readers. It is a story of the fraudulent imposition of a double upon the betrothed of the one he resembles, causing a perplexing complication and situations full of pathos. The heroine is a cultivated girl, of fine and lovable traits, who is placed in a position which appeals to the active sympathy and honor of every true man. This novel exercises a wholesome influence on the side of truth, and warns the unsuspecting against the dangers which exist in society and which often entrap those who are least exposed. It is a very interesting story.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the publishers,

**ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,**

Cor. William and Spruce Streets, New York.



1058  
"The Wholesome Educator of Millions."

1895  
Semi-Centennial Volume

162  
THE  
NEW YORK LEDGER

For Fifty Years the Leading Illustrated National Family  
Weekly Paper of America.

CONTRIBUTORS OF THE "LEDGER:"

The following gives only a partial list of the distinguished writers who will contribute to the *Ledger* during 1894:

Edward Everett Hale,	Hon. James Bryce,
Mrs. Ballington Booth,	Olive Thorne Miller,
George Kennan,	Mary Kyle Dallas,
Mary Lowe Dickinson,	Mrs. N. S. Stowell,
Hjalmar H. Boyeson,	Theodore Roosevelt,
Helen Campbell,	Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth,
John Habberton,	S. P. Cadman,
Washington Gladden, D. D.,	Hon. Thomas Dunn English,
Mrs. M. A. Kidder,	E. Werner,
Eben E. Rexford,	Helen V. Greyson,
Elizabeth Olmis,	Dr. Charles C. Abbott,
E. A. Robinson,	Prof. Felix L. Oswald.

A Four-Dollar Paper for Only TWO Dollars.

Our Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter and Fourth-of-July Numbers, with beautifully illuminated covers, will be sent without extra charge to all our subscribers.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE, \$2 A YEAR.

*Free Specimen Copies on Application.*

ROBERT BONNER'S SONS, Publishers,  
Cor. William and Spruce Sts., New York.



A Russian Novel.

---

# ALL OR NOTHING.

AFTER THE RUSSIAN OF COUNT NEPOMUK CZAPSKI.

BY

META DE VERE.

*ILLUSTRATED BY WALTER M. DUNK.*

12mo. 300 pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.25.  
Paper Cover, 50 Cents.

---

This novel made a great sensation in Russia, because the characters in it are all taken from life, and it introduces the plot of blowing up the czar while at dinner in his palace, an actual historical fact. The story, without being sensational, is full of stirring actions. The characters are well sustained, and the local color is carefully preserved. The work has been rendered into English in a free and vigorous translation, and forms one of the best contributions to the library of cosmopolitan fiction yet made by Russia. Like all great Russian novels, it has a distinct flavor and thrilling interest.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent, postpaid, on receipt of price, by the publishers,

ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,  
COR. WILLIAM AND SPRUCE STREETS, NEW YORK.



A Russian Novel.

# ALL OR NOTHING.

AFTER THE RUSSIAN OF COUNT NÉPOMUC CZAPSKI.

BY

METÁ DE VERE.

ILLUSTRATED BY WALTER M. DOWK.

## HOLDENHURST HALL.

This novel made a great sensation in Russia, because the characters in it are all taken from life, and it introduces the plot of blowing up the czar while at dinner in his palace, an actual historical fact. The story, without being sensational, is full of stirring actions. The characters are well sustained, and the local color is carefully preserved. The work has been rendered into English in a free and vigorous translation, and forms one of the best contributions to the library of cosmopolitan fiction yet made by Russia. Like all great Russian novels, it has a distinct flavor and thrilling interest.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price, by the publishers:

ROBERT BONNER'S SONS

COR. WILKINSON AND SPRUCE STREETS, NEW YORK.

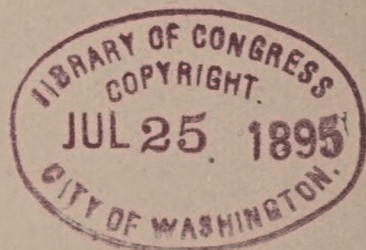






# HOLDENHURST HALL

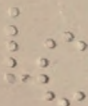
A Novel.



33538 aa

✓ BY  
WALTER BLOOMFIELD.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY WARREN B. DAVIS.



NEW YORK:  
ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,  
PUBLISHERS.

---

THE CHOICE SERIES: ISSUED MONTHLY. SUBSCRIPTION PRICE, SIX DOLLARS PER ANNUM. NO. 126,  
AUGUST 1, 1895. ENTERED AT THE NEW YORK, N. Y., POST OFFICE AS SECOND CLASS MAIL MATTER.

*[Handwritten signature]*



PZ 3  
B623  
H0  
2

COPYRIGHT, 1895.

BY ROBERT BONNER'S SONS.

(All rights reserved.)

*Published Simultaneously in London and New York.*

*Partially Reprinted from "The New York Ledger."*

PRESS OF  
THE NEW YORK LEDGER  
NEW YORK.



TO

H.H. PRINCE FREDERICK DULEEP SINGH—

INTERESTED IN ALL THAT PERTAINS  
TO SUFFOLK, AND FIRST TO EXPRESS  
APPROBATION OF THE FOLLOWING  
FICTION—THIS VOLUME IS RESPECT-  
FULLY DEDICATED







# CONTENTS.

	PAGE
I. THE BROTHERS . . . . .	I
II. THE OAK CHESTS . . . . .	6
III. A FAMILY DINNER PARTY . . . . .	11
IV. DISAPPOINTMENT . . . . .	18
V. HOLDENHURST HALL . . . . .	23
VI. UNCLE SAM AND THE REV. SILAS FULLER . . . . .	30
VII. CONSTANCE MARSH . . . . .	37
VIII. NEWS FROM AUSTRALIA . . . . .	44
IX. RECALLED TO SUFFOLK . . . . .	52
X. RECORD OF A WASTED LIFE : ROGER TRUEMAN, HIS HISTORY; WRITTEN WITH HIS OWN HAND, A.D. 1671 . . . . .	59
XI. ROGER TRUEMAN : HIS RECORD CONTINUED . . . . .	70
XII. ROGER TRUEMAN : HIS RECORD CONCLUDED . . . . .	78
XIII. UNREST . . . . .	96
XIV. THE CRYPT . . . . .	104
XV. FATHER AND SON . . . . .	112
XVI. EXIT UNCLE SAM . . . . .	120
XVII. TO THE WEST . . . . .	129
XVIII. NEW YORK CITY . . . . .	140
XIX. MRS SAMUEL TRUMAN "AT HOME" . . . . .	149
XX. THE OLD STORY. . . . .	159



# CONTENTS.

CHAP.	PAGE
XXI. ANNIE WOLSEY FOUND . . . . .	168
XXII. TWO CONFESSIONS . . . . .	178
XXIII. AT TARRYTOWN . . . . .	188
XXIV. THE ACCUSATION . . . . .	201
XXV. DEATH . . . . .	215
XXVI. HOMELESS . . . . .	219
XXVII. AT THE WINDSOR HOTEL, NEW YORK . . . . .	226
XXVIII. MISTRESS AND WIFE . . . . .	236
XXIX. CONCORD . . . . .	243
XXX. UNCLE SAM DOWN . . . . .	253
XXXI. AT NEWPORT . . . . .	262
XXXII. Εὐρηκα . . . . .	272
XXXIII. CONCLUSION . . . . .	281



# HOLDENHURST HALL.



## I.

### THE BROTHERS.

Though like in sex and creed and race,  
Sprung from one father and one mother,  
Yet who in each career may trace  
Resemblance that denotes the brother?

"WELL, if I had determined to go to the devil, I would not elect to travel *via* the workhouse."

I had been closely observing my uncle for more than two hours, and diligently noting his words and gestures, when his utterance of this remarkable sentence confirmed the dislike of him which I had conceived at our first meeting. With only a brief and narrow experience of men and manners, the words impressed me as harsh, not to say brutal, for a rich man to address to an only brother whom he had not seen for twenty years, and who was comparatively poor.

"I have made no such determination," said my father. "As for the workhouse, my income is still some seven hundred pounds a year more than nothing, and I don't anticipate becoming a burden to anybody, not even"—turning his face towards me and smiling—"my own son."

"Seven hundred pounds!" exclaimed my uncle Sam, contemptuously, "seven hundred pounds! And what will that pitiful sum do towards maintaining a gentleman for twelve months? Why, there are four of the men in my pay who each earn fifteen hundred dollars more than your entire



income ! But how's this ? Holdenhurst used not to be such a beggarly property, or my memory is worse than I thought it was."

While my father is occupied with the melancholy recital of the causes, natural and political, of the enormous depreciation of agricultural values in England—which in ten years had reduced his income by rather more than half—I will furnish the reader with a brief history of the men thus engaged.

When little more than ten years old my father, Robert Truman, had succeeded to an estate of two thousand acres, consisting of two entire parishes, Holdenhurst Major and Holdenhurst Minor, situate a few miles from Bury St Edmund's, in Suffolk. On his coming of age, Robert Truman found himself the possessor of a rent roll of £1500, a lump sum of about £12,000, which had accumulated during his minority, and a large nondescript manorhouse of which no archæologist could determine the date or order, it had been so much altered and added to at various periods. The estate, which had formed part of the immense possessions of the rich abbots of Bury, was, upon the dissolution of the abbey there, settled by Henry VIII. in perpetuity upon the first member of my family of whom there exists any record.

With but one relation in the world—his brother Samuel, two years his junior—undoubtedly my father entered upon the business of life under conditions more prosperous than attend the vast majority of mankind. But that balance which men adjust where Fortune has shown more favour to one than to another, themselves making the tale of human happiness and misery nearly the same in all cases, was soon made apparent by the two brothers. The affections of these young men centred upon one girl. Samuel was the favoured lover. But women had few rights and many wrongs in agricultural East Anglia in 18—; and so the beauty of Holdenhurst became the wife of Robert Truman; her father, a small farmer ambitious of forming a family connection with the "Squire," having so commanded her.



Before the marriage my uncle Sam left England for America with the expressed intention of never again visiting his native land. In less than a year my father had lost by death the wife he had thus acquired ; a loss which, though it deeply affected him, was patiently borne for the sake of the infant boy who was at once the cause of his sorrow and his hope.

In America Samuel Truman had entered into commercial speculations and flourished exceedingly. On the death of my mother he had written to my father a few lines expressing his sympathy—his first communication with his brother after his departure from England. After that his letters had been brief and infrequent ; but reports reached Holdenhurst from time to time of his extraordinary success in trading, of his ever-increasing wealth and influence, of his shrewdness, his penetration, his singleness of purpose. Through all the days of my boyhood I remember no variation in the accounts of the steady and continued decline in value of my father's property, and of the rapid increase of my uncle's wealth. Neither of these circumstances, however, interested me until, in my nineteenth year—the week before this history opens—my father received a letter from his brother in New York stating that he had been married for three years to an American lady, and that he and his wife intended to visit Holdenhurst, and might be expected to arrive in about ten days.

It was almost immediately after the arrival of my uncle at Holdenhurst, thus intimated, that the conversation with which this chapter opens took place. Uncle Sam did not, however, bring his wife with him as he had intended, but left that lady in London in a furnished house which he had hired at Kensington, she being prostrated by the voyage from America.

“Well,” said uncle Sam, when my father had finished speaking, “I guess your oration would be worth a cool million to the Republican party. You must visit the States and tell the Americans from a hundred platforms all you have just told me. You must come at the opening of the Presidential campaign.



Why, you will convert every Tariff reformer from Maine to California! The Democrats will be smashed."

My father shook his head. "I am no traveller," he said, "or I should have ventured beyond Europe nineteen years ago," again turning towards me and assuming the kindly expression which was never absent from his features when he regarded his son. "The affairs of my own country engage very little of my attention, and as for the United \_\_\_\_\_"

"Well, well," interrupted uncle Sam, "we won't discuss that matter further at present. What is the sum total of the two mortgages you have on this place?"

"Three thousand five hundred pounds."

"Let me have the papers," said uncle Sam, stretching his hand out as though he expected that his brother had them ready in his pocket, "and I will wipe them both out to-morrow."

"You are very kind," answered my father, somewhat embarrassed. "Ernest, go to my black cabinet and fetch an oblong packet. You will find it in the top drawer, tied with red tape."

With a greatly improved opinion of my uncle, I hastened upon my errand, and in a minute or so my father was handing his brother the papers for which he had asked.

"It's a smart lad," remarked my uncle, fixing his steel grey eyes upon me so penetratively that I felt rather uncomfortable; "what are you going to do with him?"

"Do with him?" echoed my father; "I don't understand."

"Well, do you propose that he should spend his life in this place watching the crops fail, or selling them for less than the cost of production when they succeed; or is he to be a man whose presence is felt in the world?"

"I have not yet seriously considered Ernest's future," answered my father gravely.

"Then let me help you to do so another time," said uncle Sam. "I'll return to town by the first train in the morning, and having paid off these mortgages, will be back again some-



time in the evening, bringing Mrs Truman with me, if she is well enough to come. By-the-by, I suppose this packet contains all the documents necessary in closing the mortgages. Do Saul and Isaacs hold any of the old deeds?"

"All the necessary papers are there," said my father. "The money was advanced simply on my note of hand. The old grants of the abbey lands in Latin and Norman French are still in the two old oak chests where they have always been."

"I would like to see them," said my uncle; "they must be very interesting."

"You shall. Ernest shall get them out for you to look at by the time you return."



## II.

### THE OAK CHESTS.

Tokens and trifles mark the flight of years,  
Domestic records, and with silent force  
Recall our half-forgotten hopes and fears,  
And point to Time's unheeded, hastening course.

This thin gold ring, worn almost to a thread,  
For fifty years served to denote a wife  
Now for a century numbered with the dead—  
Yet here the bauble which she prized in life !

The face this ivory miniature presents  
Is fresh and fair, a maiden in her prime ;  
My grandame in her days of innocence !  
Long fallen a prey to all-devouring Time.

ACCUSTOMED from my infancy to wander unrestrained through the gloomy rooms and corridors of Holdenhurst Hall, I had flattered myself that I was familiar with every nook and corner of the old mansion.

But my mind was considerably exercised in the endeavour to determine the whereabouts of the two oak chests to which my father had referred in his conversation with uncle Sam. I did not remember having ever seen any such chests, and could think of no place from garret to basement which I considered likely to contain them.

These thoughts—much confused with idle speculation concerning my uncle whose acquaintance I had just made, of my aunt whom I had not yet seen, and of various ideas started by



the conversation of the two brothers—kept me awake until long after I had retired to bed.

I tossed about restlessly and punched my pillows, but could not sleep. When I lay on my left side, all that my uncle had said recurred to me vividly, and I hated him for his cool cynicism and the sense of power which had now and again been apparent through the calmness of his manner; but, turning upon my right, his generous gift impressed me as really magnificent, and I could not but feel grateful to him for relieving my father of what I knew had occasioned him some anxiety. My uncle's wish, too, for a voice in determining my future course in life interested me greatly and opened interminable trains of thought. At last I lost consciousness, but did not sleep soundly nor for long.

When I rose, it wanted some minutes to six o'clock. A brilliant streak of sunshine lay across the dark oak floor of my room, and through the casement could be discerned a clear blue sky such as is seldom seen in England in the month of March.

Brimful of health and animal spirits, notwithstanding the little sleep I had had, I sprung from my bed, and, having hurriedly dressed, sought my father.

Somehow, in an ill-defined way, I was conscious of the opening of a new era in my life. Whether it was what had transpired between my father and uncle on the previous night; or the joyousness of the opening day, which was of a sort that seemed to confirm the death of winter and herald approaching summer, or both, I know not; but it seemed to me that I had bidden adieu to boyhood and had become a man.

My father had risen a full hour before me, and was pacing the outer path of our old garden, with his hands clasped behind him—his usual contemplative attitude.

"Why," said he, after I had acquainted him with my difficulty, "'tis only yesterday that I noticed you sitting upon one of the chests, reading. They stand in the library, one beneath each window, where they have stood for the last three



hundred years or more. It was your grandmother, I think, who worked cushions and valances for them, and so converted them into strange-looking but comfortable settees."

Alas, I was ashamed to think how many of my boyish hours I had spent lying upon one or other of these chests aimlessly reading romances and poetry when I had been supposed to be studying more useful but less congenial matter!

As soon as we had breakfasted my father began to search for the keys of the chests, for he had but a vague idea as to where they might be found. While he was employed rummaging old bureaus and cabinets, I removed the coverings from the chests, marvelling greatly that they should have so long escaped my notice. To do this, and to clear the table ready to receive the documents, did not engage me many minutes, and I was impatient to obtain the keys.

But the keys could not be found. I assisted my father in the search for them, and together we turned over as many knick-knacks — quaint jewellery, miniatures, pocket-books, tokens, old coins, packets of love-letters tied with faded silk and dated early in the last century, metal purses, scent bottles, etc.—as would have stocked a first-class curiosity shop. But that which we sought we could not find.

It was now past noon, and my uncle and aunt were expected to arrive at four o'clock. Though we had been searching for several hours we had not yet examined the contents of half the cabinets and closets which abounded in our old manorhouse, many of which had not been opened within the memory of our oldest servant. My father would have given up the search but for my advice to him to continue it. Wisely or unwisely, my father seldom or never refused to comply with any wish that I expressed, and he saw that I was interested in the odds and ends accumulated by our family.

After another two hours of searching my father found the keys of the chests, tied together and labelled, in the place where he had first looked for them. With a peculiar facial expression, in which it was difficult to determine whether fatigue,



annoyance, or triumph predominated, he tossed them to me and, remarking that he had had as much of this affair as he cared for in one day, left me to do as I pleased.

Having hurriedly deposited the few things before me in the places where they had been found, I hastened to the library and proceeded to open the nearest chest. The key entered the lock as easily as might be wished, but was turned with difficulty, and made a harsh, grating sound. I had no sooner raised the lid than the air became so charged with minute fungi that I involuntarily stepped back and opened a window.

The chest was quite filled with parchment or vellum documents, some rolled and others flat, and to nearly all of them were attached large pendulous seals. I did not pause to examine them, but transferred them all to the table, and opened the second chest, wherein I discovered nearly as many documents as in the first, all of similar character. But there was also a thick folio volume, filled with close, neat writing, every letter of which appeared to be formed with great care and accuracy. About two-thirds of the book was English, and the remainder strange characters, which I had little doubt were Oriental, though I was not scholar enough to determine the language to which they belonged. This book, and a copper box, about eighteen inches by twelve, and five inches deep, were all I found besides the documents. The box, which was locked, was much discoloured; but I could discern writing upon the lid such as may be produced by nitrate of silver upon copper. All I could decipher at a hasty glance was "Roger Trueman," written in characters rather larger than the others. Trueman being a very old form of our family name, and the box exceedingly heavy for its size, I at once conceived the hope that it contained something of special value. As I could find no key to the box, I set it aside with the folio volume, resolving to carefully examine both at my leisure.

At this moment a servant entered the room and informed me that my uncle and aunt had arrived. Dinner had been



ordered to be served as soon as possible, and there barely remained sufficient time for me to prepare for it.

Quite tired of my day's work, the intelligence was not unwelcome. Taking with me the folio volume and the copper box, I locked the library door and put the key in my pocket, leaving all the old documents on the table within. I then sought my bedroom, where, having safely bestowed the book and box, I made what I then thought was an elaborate toilette such as befitted my introduction to my American kinswoman.



### III.

#### A FAMILY DINNER PARTY.

This way and that the brothers went—  
This one to range a continent,  
And this at home to find content  
In patriarchal tillage.

Man's life is brief and years fly fast,  
And, twenty summers quickly passed,  
The exile sees again at last  
His native English village.

The tale is new and yet is old,  
How some will lose while some gain gold  
In ways diverse a thousandfold,  
And call it trade—not pillage.

THE dining-room at Holdenhurst Hall was a large, sombre apartment. The floor was of oak, uneven through age, and perilously slippery, and the walls of Dutch oak panelling, relieved here and there by portraits in oils of horses and dogs. Four windows did not admit sufficient light for the room, and on the spacious hearth no fire could be made large enough for comfort in winter. The centre was occupied by an enormous table, supported by legs about ten inches shorter than those with which a modern dining table is furnished, and round it were ranged thirty-two chairs, fifteen at either side and one at each end—cumbersome structures of oak and embossed leather, mounted on wheels. Indeed, I never look at this table without recalling the ludicrous aspect presented by our friend



Major Armstrong, of the Suffolk Yeomanry, when dining with us. Major Armstrong stands six feet four, and the distance from his plate to his mouth is so great that when he is engaged with the former it appears almost as if he were digging the ground with his fork. A large sideboard, loaded with silver, completed the furniture of the room.

When I entered, it was at once apparent that this was a special occasion. The table was lighted by more candles, and spread somewhat more luxuriously than usual, and, infallible sign! old John, our one indoor manservant, had on his yellow silk waistcoat—a venerable and conspicuous article of his attire which I remembered from my earliest infancy, but had never before known him to wear except on Sundays—and was moving about busily between the sideboard and the table.

I disturbed my relations in an examination they were making of the quaintly carved mantelpiece. My father at once stepped towards me, and taking my hand in his own, led me towards a beautiful and very elaborately dressed lady, saying—

“Permit me to introduce my son. Ernest, this lady is your aunt Gertrude.”

Now though in the first blush of my youth I had suffered from overmuch self-consciousness, I had flattered myself of late that I had reasoned myself out of that malady, and was as self-possessed as a young man of nineteen need be. Vain delusion! Whether it was the striking beauty of my aunt, the splendour of her dress and jewels, or my intense surprise at finding her a woman of at most thirty, whom I had mentally pictured as about fifteen years older than that, I know not; but certain it is, I had never felt so awkward and foolish before. I cannot quite remember what I said, but I believe a few disconnected words escaped my lips to the effect that I was very pleased to make her acquaintance.

My aunt noticed my confusion, and with admirable tact endeavoured to allay it. “I am sure I am much gratified to see you and your father,” she said in a soft voice. “My



husband has often talked to me of you both, and of his old home in England. Your house is perfectly delightful, and I long to see more of it. You must show me all over it when you have time."

Replying that nothing could give me greater pleasure, and that I would do so to-morrow if she was sufficiently rested to undertake the task, I shook hands with my uncle and felt rather more at my ease.

My father having taken his seat at the head of the table with his sister and I on his right, and his brother on his left, John removed the covers, and dinner was served.

"No," said uncle Sam, addressing my father, "the change is not all in myself as you suggest, though of course a man's ideas modify and expand a good deal in twenty years, especially if his affairs are extensive and he mixes much with business men. Positively, I believe what I have told you, that Englishmen are vastly altered from what they were when I lived among them. They are not so enterprising; they seem to lack go and grit, and have fallen into a slow way. Everything in England is depressed—capitalists afraid to invest, labourers without work to do. Coming from London to-day, we saw a man and a boy with two horses ploughing a field. Why, the scene would serve for an illustration to one of Pope's pastorals. No wonder that farming in England don't pay when you tickle and scratch the earth in such primitive fashion! And while the labourers are killing time in this way, your legislators are talking about small farms and allotments for labourers. Bosh, my dear sir, bosh! What is wanted is for at least a hundred landowners in each county to form a trust, and to employ modern machinery in cultivating their aggregated lands—that is to say, a farm of tolerable size. By-the-by, what is the acreage of this place?"

"Two thousand acres."

"A mere potato patch! I have a lot twenty-five times as large, as good as or better than the best soil in England, within a hundred miles of Chicago—acquired it in one deal."



"Are the large farms in America very profitable?" asked my father.

"No ; the most unprofitable things in the States ; still, they do pay a beggarly fifteen or twenty per cent. Nobody loses money by them."

"And the labourers—of course they are paid more liberally than in England."

"Liberally ! What has liberality to do with a business arrangement ? The labourer sells his labour for the most money he can get for it, and the capitalist sells his money for the most labour he can get for it. Midway between these antagonistic forces is found the natural rate of wages. An American labourer does better for himself than an English labourer, if that is what you mean."

I observed my uncle closely while he talked to my father. He was a tall man, slightly built, with regular features, fresh complexion, and keen, restless eyes. His manner was very earnest, and he had a habit of looking hard at the person to whom he was speaking. His style was too aggressive to please me, but I considered him a very clever man, and was much interested in all that he said. Personally, he slightly resembled my father ; in other respects the two men were absolutely different. My father was a man of few words, and his subdued manner showed that he regarded the doings of men rather as a spectator than as an actor among them.

My uncle and father continuing to talk together upon subjects in which neither my aunt nor I could join, it occurred to me that the lady was neglected ; and I deliberated upon the expediency of opening a conversation with her. Failing to think of anything more appropriate, I asked her how she liked England, but was so nervous in putting the question that I knocked the contents of a salt cellar into her lap.

This unlucky accident afforded me an unexpected relief. My aunt accepted my apologies so gracefully, and with such charming good humour, that I was enabled from that moment to converse with her like a rational being. Looking at her



somewhat more observantly than I had done before, I noticed that she had a profusion of brown, wavy hair, that her light blue eyes were large and expressive, her features beautiful, and her figure admirably proportioned. Altogether, I thought her the handsomest woman I had ever seen.

"I arrived in England less than a week ago," she said, "and have seen very little of your country. I like London immensely, what I know of it at Kensington; but I have not even visited your Museum there yet. When we return to London at the end of the week, I hope to present my introductions and to go about a little with my sister."

"Have you a sister in England?" asked my father, looking up.

"Yes," said uncle Sam, answering for his wife; "didn't you know that? Mrs Truman has a young sister who lives with us—her only relation in the world excepting we three. I thought I told you about her."

"No," said my father; "I have never heard of her. Why didn't you bring her with you to Holdenhurst?"

"Constance was more upset by the voyage even than I," remarked my aunt, "and did not feel equal to coming here."

"You should know Connie," said my uncle, addressing me; "she's a smart girl."

I made no reply to this; but my aunt filled up the gap by asking if I was at liberty to return to London with them, that they might have the benefit of my knowledge of the metropolis. I knew of no objection to the proposal except that my knowledge of London was very limited—an objection at once overruled.

"Taking him all round, I prefer old Marsh to any man I ever met; not because he gave me one of his daughters and half of his fortune, though that is something, but because it was he who removed the English scales from my eyes and caused me to look at the world like an American."

"And is Mr Marsh dead?" inquired my father.

"Very dead," said my uncle. "He has been balancing a



marble column on his chest in Greenwood Cemetery for three years or more."

My father and I were shocked at the levity of uncle Sam, and our faces must have indicated our thoughts, for aunt Gertrude remarked—

"You must not mind all that my husband says. His acts are more Christian than his words. I cannot reform his manner, so must apologise for him."

"Well, you see," said uncle Sam, continuing, "too strongly marked Christianity spoils a man of business. I could cite several instances. After all, what are called honest men are merely thieves who lack the courage of their convictions—feeble folks who tremble at taking the shortest way to the accomplishment of their purposes. I know many a man in New York accounted a paragon of virtue who is as full of hypocrisy as ever was Holdenhurst Church on a Sunday. I like to deal with a man who I know will overreach me if he can, and who expects as much of me ; matters are simplified, and the trade moves quickly."

"When you lived in England you had no such ideas. If I remember rightly, you used to read poetry, and were inclined to be moody and sentimental, as Ernest is now."

"True ; but I am sorry to hear that your son is stricken that way. Look to him ; watch him. So long as he confines himself to reading poetry there is some hope of him ; 'tis when he attempts to write poetry that you must put him into a strait-jacket. Let me take him with me to New York at the end of the summer ; or, better still, take him there yourself. A temperature low enough to freeze Tennyson's brook, and a careful daily study of market prices in Wall Street, will make a man of him inside of three months. What do you say to that, Ernest?"

"I don't know what to say, uncle, only that I should very much like to visit America."

"A good answer. You shall certainly do so ; and your father with you, I hope. We have a brown stone house on



East Thirty-fourth Street, close to Fifth Avenue, and a frame cottage at Newport, Rhode Island, both telephonically connected with my offices in the Mills Building. We have also a private railroad car, which I would like you to compare with those rat-traps your Great Eastern Company calls carriages. Our *chef* is as good as can be found outside Delmonico's. Come and stay with us, and we will feed you upon oysters, blue fish, canvas-back ducks, terrapin, Canadian frogs, and sweet potatoes, won't we, Gertrude?"

"Of course we shall be very pleased indeed to see you, and will do all in our power to make you comfortable," said my aunt.

My father thanked his guests; but I noticed that he carefully avoided committing himself to either an acceptance or a rejection of this invitation. Before we adjourned to the drawing-room it was arranged that I was to devote the following morning to showing my aunt over the house and grounds, while my father and uncle discussed a certain business matter. We were all to meet again at luncheon, and I was afterwards to exhibit the documents my father and I had been at so much pains to bring to light. My uncle, having approved of these arrangements, ignited a fusee on the heel of his boot, and applied the flame to a cigar, from which he proceeded to puff clouds of smoke larger and denser than I should have thought was possible to produce by such means.



#### IV

#### DISAPPOINTMENT.

Our dreams are but a reflex of our lives,  
The crude harmonics of discordant days,  
And wasted is his labour who contrives  
By visions of the night to shape his ways.

THERE is a peculiar condition of mind incident to some persons whose correspondence is small, which induces them to carefully examine the envelope of a letter addressed by a strange hand—an indescribable fascination in speculating as to who the writer may be and why he has written. It is seldom that this self-imposed doubt lasts longer than is necessary to make out the writing and postmark, and then the letter is opened—a thing which would have been done by a busy or practical man at the instant of its receipt.

Influenced by some such feeling, I delayed to open the copper box which I had taken from the oak chest in the library, though the nature of its contents strongly excited my curiosity. An instinctive belief that the contents were valuable had taken a firm hold of my imagination, though I could not in any degree support such belief by an appeal to reason. The contents of both the oak chests had doubtless been examined by bygone members of my family at least as often as the property had passed from father to son, and probably with greater frequency. It is true the chests had not been opened for a quarter of a century or so; but then the lid of the copper box bore the date

This 23d daye Oct<sup>re</sup> 1671,



and I could not do such violence to my credulity as to suppose that the contents had been suffered to remain so many years unexamined—which made strongly against the presumption that they were of any value. But the strongest human hopes are oftenest reared upon the most unstable foundations. I had certainly suffered the hope to grow upon me that it had been reserved for me to make a valuable discovery; and knowing that my chances of doing anything of the sort were the most shadowy conceivable, I delayed to open the box, contenting myself for the present by carefully examining its exterior.

In this unprofitable occupation I wasted I know not how long, until, doubting whether I should be awake in time to keep the promise I had made to conduct my aunt Gertrude over our old house—no brief task, for it contained thirty or more rooms and was a maze to the uninitiated—I hurried to bed, and was soon in the torments of the most chaotic dream which has ever disturbed my brain. I beheld gorgeous barbaric palaces set in delightful climes; processions of men magnificently apparelled, of which the principal figures displayed an amazing profusion of jewels; vast heaps of gold coins of strange mintage; quaint jars filled with precious stones which gleamed and sparkled; and dimly lighted vaults in which fierce men, bearded and turbanned, were inflicting horrible indignities on defenceless women, strangling some with bows and beheading others with scimitars. These scenes were presented to my mind as in a phantasmagoria, the last appearing so intensely real in its horror that I shrieked at beholding it, and rushing at a hideous old Turk, who was firmly grasping the hair of a kneeling girl while he swung his scimitar around the better to strike her neck, I awoke, bathed in perspiration, and was spared the sciomachic encounter.

The church clock struck four, and the glow in the eastern sky was as yet but feeble. I was intensely relieved to find myself once more in my usual frame of mind, amid my usual



surroundings. My terror vanished on opening my eyes and discovering my situation ; but the dream had made an impression on my mind so deep that I could not disengage my thoughts from it ; neither could I in any way account for it. I had never been subject to oneirodynia, nor had I recently read or talked of oriental magnificence and barbarity. I was powerless either to account for the dream or to dismiss it from my mind.

After pondering the matter for three hours or more I arose, and dressing myself with the same fastidious care as on the previous day—a habit which I had resolved to henceforth cultivate—I descended into the breakfast-room.

My father and uncle were standing by the window engaged in earnest conversation, and old John was busy at his sideboard. My uncle at once stepped towards me and seized my hand, which he squeezed rather harder than I considered necessary or comfortable, and having wished me a good morning, informed me that I had been the subject of his conversation with my father.

“I am afraid you find Holdenhurst a very dull place when you can find nothing more interesting to talk of,” I remarked.

“Not at all, not at all,” said uncle Sam. “I will tell you all about it before I leave.”

“Breakfast is quite ready,” said my father, “and we may as well have it at once, although it wants some minutes to eight. Mrs Truman will take her breakfast in her room.”

At this we all three took our seats at the table.

“Why, Ernest, my boy, what has become of your colour?” asked uncle Sam. “Yesterday you were a typical little Englishman, but this morning you appear as bloodless as a New York dude.”

I related my dream. Uncle Sam laughed immoderately at the recital, and, pushing his chair somewhat further from the table, swayed himself to and fro and roared. My father’s face, too, wore a broad smile which merged into a laugh as I proceeded.



"Did you read the 'Arabian Nights' just before you went to bed?" my father inquired.

"'Arabian Nights!'" echoed uncle Sam, interrupting me as I was about to reply; "why, if he were in London, I should have said that he had been to the Alhambra, witnessed the ballet, got drunk at the bars, and been locked up for the night. Ha, ha! I'd give a thousand dollars, and sup on pork and cucumbers for a month, if only I might dream that dream."

"It seems to please you, Sam," said my father.

"It does. If I had not become an American, I would have exchanged my English nationality for that of Turkey or Persia, my Christianity for Mohammedanism. Boundless liberty and absolute despotism both appeal to my taste. Besides, they are not so different as some people suppose; extremes meet, you know. The quasi-liberty enjoyed, or the quasi-despotism suffered—express it which way you will—by Englishmen in England, would be intolerable to me. By-the-by, I'm not the first Truman who has renounced his native nationality, am I, Bob? Didn't that old ass of an alchemist, who spent twenty years of his life in trying to extract gold from everything that didn't contain it, become a Turk?"

"You mean old Roger," said my father thoughtfully. "Yes, I believe he did; but he must have reverted to the nationality of his fathers, if not to their faith, for he lived many years in this house after his return from the East, and died here near the close of the seventeenth century."

"Who was Roger Truman?" I asked, looking up.

"An ancestor of ours, who died about two centuries ago. He was a younger brother, who left home when he was about your age. After travelling for some time in the East, he entered the service of the Sultan of Turkey, who made him governor of a province. He returned to England, after an absence of many years, and took up his residence here, in his brother's house. Very little is known about him. He survived his brother, but continued to live here with his nephew. He



lived the life of a recluse, spending all his days and some of his nights in the crypt underneath the house, where he had established a laboratory. He used to amuse himself with researches in chemistry. I believe some of his old bottles and things are there now."

It cost me some pains to conceal the great interest which this information had for me, and I am not quite sure that the earnestness of my attention was unobserved by my uncle. Indeed, I always felt as if that astute individual had power to read my thoughts, and was never quite at my ease in his presence. However, I adroitly changed the subject of conversation; but my thoughts were still of Roger Truman and of what my father had said of him, and I resolved to open the copper box which bore his name immediately after breakfast.

Uncle Sam was a restless man, and would not sit at table for more than half an hour if he could decently avoid doing so. He was, of course, quite unrestrained by the presence of my father and me, and had therefore no sooner swallowed his breakfast than he rose and asked his brother if he were ready to accompany him on a walk round the estate; which, he observed, would afford a good opportunity for discussing certain proposals he had to make. My father agreed, and I retired to my room to open the copper box.

I had no key to the box; nor would probably a key have been of any use, for the lock was much corroded. By the aid of a strong hunting-knife and the exertion of as much force as I could command, I prised open the lid, and the whole of the contents fell out on the floor. To my great disappointment, an examination proved these to consist of several neatly tied bundles of manuscripts and a manuscript book, discoloured by age and of mouldy odour. While I was engaged in examining these papers with closer attention than they appeared to be worth, old John entered my room to inform me that my aunt was waiting in the drawing-room for me to show her over the house. Carelessly throwing the box and its contents into a drawer, I followed the servant downstairs.





ERNEST LANDING FROM THE STEAMER IN NEW YORK.







## V.

### HOLDENHURST HALL.

An English manor house built on a hill,  
A spot where monks and friars in olden time  
Fasted and prayed and mumbled o'er their beads ;  
Or, moved by vintage in their vaults concealed,  
Scraped on their viols and sang, living at ease ;  
Where pious Christians brought their liberal gifts,  
Of which a fraction reached th' unportioned poor.

As soon as I reached the corridor which led from my room to the staircase, I perceived my aunt waiting for me on one of the spacious landings which mark each flight—really a room, and partly furnished as such, being set out with settees, and the walls adorned with paintings, armour, and ancient weapons.

She was dressed for walking, and wore a tightly fitting dress, which did not reach the ground by two or three inches, and a large Gainsborough hat. As she stood looking out of the open window, her small gloved hand grasping her umbrella while she thoughtfully tapped her boot with the ferrule, I noted her well. Undoubtedly my aunt Gertrude was very beautiful. If features and figure of classical proportions, height somewhat exceeding the average, delicate complexion, and large eyes, capable of tender and varied expression, entitle a woman to be so considered, then my opinion might not be dissented from.

She was regarding the green meadows which lay at the back of our house—typical Suffolk meadows, intersected by a shallow stream fringed with willows, and dotted here and there



with red cattle—and was quite unconscious of being observed. In one particular only was my first impression of her changed. I had thought she was about thirty, but it now seemed impossible that she could be so old.

My aunt was too observant of the peaceful English scene before her to notice my approach, and I had to call her attention to my presence by wishing her a good morning.

“I am quite impatient to explore your wonderful old house,” she said, after we had exchanged the usual formal greetings; “but pray don’t allow me to interfere with your ordinary daily engagements. Your uncle and I don’t return to London till Monday, so there remain two more days for me at Holdenhurst. Another time will suit me nearly as well, if you are busy now.”

“I am never busy,” I replied; “and I rarely make any engagements. I have very few friends, and no enemies—so far as I know. Nearly all my time, since I left school, has been passed at Holdenhurst—walking and riding about the place, and reading and playing to father.”

“What is it that you play?”

“The pianoforte. I am very fond of music, and so is my father.”

“You must play for me this evening. I am a poor pianist, but some people think I can sing,” said aunt Gertrude.

I replied that I should be delighted to do so.

While this conversation was in progress we had walked as far as the entrance hall, which I thought was the best place wherein to essay my skill as showman. This hall was a large square apartment with floor, walls, and ceiling of dark oak. Opposite the great door, and distant from it about twenty feet, was an enormous fireplace with a chimney piece of white marble fantastically carved, surmounted by a portrait in oils of a red-faced middle-aged man clad in a leather jerkin, with collar of preposterous width, and a flop hat of such liberal proportions that an Italian peasant might have envied it, supposed to represent the founder of my family. He looked little enough



like a man who would ingratiate himself with his king or anybody else ; but as I subsequently heard my uncle remark, it is probable that Henry VIII. was a better judge of women than men. On the right and left of the fireplace were wide staircases which led up to corridors. The walls were nearly covered with pictures, chiefly family portraits, relieved here and there by weapons and deers' antlers hung in various devices. Doors led out of the hall into the dining-room, library, and two parlours or reception-rooms, and from these doors to the great entrance door were laid narrow strips of carpet—a highly necessary precaution ; for, as some people have painfully learned, a frozen lake is not more slippery than a polished oak floor. Indeed, I well remember when I was a young boy the amusement I derived from peeping over the banisters of the staircase to see my father receive his guest, the newly-appointed Bishop of Norwich. The Bishop was a fat man, intolerably ceremonious, and with an ever-present consciousness of his newly acquired dignity ; but he was unacquainted with the qualities of polished oak floors. Scarcely had this divine crossed our threshold ere he lay on his back, brandishing his legs rhythmically in the air, until restored to perpendicularity by the united efforts of my father and old John.

My aunt was greatly interested in the pictures, and asked more questions about them than I was able to answer. Nearly half an hour was spent examining the entrance hall, and I had to state plainly that at this rate of progression a day would be inadequate for the accomplishment of our task, and to suggest that we paid less attention to each object of interest. We then wandered into the library, carelessly turned over the old parchments which still lay on the table, and looked at the caligraphy and seals ; examined the covers of many books and the title pages of a few—treasures, all of them, such as would excite the admiration of the most phlegmatic of bibliographers and move not a few of the tribe to larceny, including a perfect first copy of Grafton's Chronicle, copies of Shakespeare's plays printed when their author was yet writing and acting in London, early



copies of Spenser and of most of the Elizabethan dramatists ; as well as many old Bibles, products of the early printing presses of continental Europe.

These books, worth, as I afterwards learned, nearly as much money as the entire Holdenhurst estate, did not interest my aunt so much as I had expected, and we quitted the library and went into the drawing-room.

“What a beautiful face and how cleverly painted !” exclaimed my aunt, pausing in front of a portrait by Watts, which had the place of honour in our drawing-room. “I was studying it just before you came downstairs. Of course it is your mother. You are very like her, Ernest.”

The obvious inference from my aunt’s sentence, and her use of my baptismal name for the first time, disconcerted me greatly.

On many occasions had I suffered from a natural proneness to blushing, but surely my self-consciousness had never been so acute as at this moment. The blood mounted quickly to my face. I could feel its warmth, and realize the absurdity of my aspect, but was unable to think clearly ; and not knowing what to say, remained silent. My aunt noticed my confusion and further remarked—

“Why, I declare, you resemble her more than ever !”

I think my aunt must have repented having caused me so much confusion ; for she suddenly turned the conversation, and inquired if any of my mother’s relations were living.

I confessed my inability to answer this question positively. “My grandfather was a very unfortunate man,” I said. “He had a large family, but lost his wife and all his children, except one, before he was fifty. Disliking the home where he had suffered so much, about five years ago he determined to settle in New Zealand ; and we have the farm he used to occupy still waiting for a tenant. He wrote to my father to inform us of his safe arrival there ; but he has never written since, and my father’s letters to him have been returned by the Post Office as undeliverable.”

“And what about his remaining child ?”



"Oh, Annie is a few months younger than I. When she was about fourteen her father apprenticed her in one of the big drapery establishments in the West End of London, but we don't know which. She didn't go to New Zealand with her father. Further than that, we know nothing about her."

"Then I am not your youngest aunt?"

"I don't know, I am sure," was my reply.

"I am twenty-six," confessed aunt Gertrude.

"Then, if Annie is living, I have an aunt nearly seven years younger. As I said, she is younger than I by a few months."

Aunt Gertrude sighed, turned somewhat abruptly from the picture, and walked through the open window onto the verandah.

The view from our verandah is probably as good as from any point in Suffolk distant from the coast. Accepting as truth a popular fallacy, some will think this is faint praise; but those acquainted with the county will hardly so regard it. No part of England is less esteemed by English people than the eastern counties; but this, like many other of our national prejudices, does not admit of any explanation. The absurd fact remains. A rolling country, highly cultivated here and there, interspersed with abundance of wild open spaces and woods which shelter immense quantities of game, with a rainfall the most moderate in Britain, would, it might well be supposed, attract many visitors—especially from London; but it is not so, and East Anglia is left very much to East Anglians, particularly that part of it called Suffolk.

The weather was delightful, the clear blue sky being streaked here and there with slowly moving white clouds, the temperature mild and refreshing, the sunshine brilliant—a Spring morning fraught with every condition to promote health and buoyancy of spirit. Aunt Gertrude shaded her eyes with her hand, and looked out towards the old abbey town. Bury St Edmund's, eight miles distant, could be faintly discerned, separated from us by a fine stretch of undulating country.

"How delightfully green everything is in England!" exclaimed my aunt enthusiastically.



“Particularly the people,” observed a voice at our back.

The voice belonged to uncle Sam. Turning round, we saw that gentleman just within the room, standing in a jaunty attitude, his hands in his pockets, chewing the end of an unlighted cigar. My father was with him, and had a pair of field-glasses in his hand.

This unexpected interruption appeared to annoy my aunt. “You are not very complimentary to your own people,” she said, slightly tossing her delicately poised head.

Her husband perceived her mood. “All right, my dear,” he said, in his most affable manner, as he stepped on to the verandah; “I forgot for the moment that some Americans are more English than the English themselves. Just let me look at the boundary line of this place and I am gone.” So saying, he took the field-glasses from my father, who remained within, and surveyed the prospect for a couple of minutes. Having completed his observation, he made no further remark, but re-entered the room and disappeared with his brother.

It was not long before my aunt and I followed. We went through a number of rooms, some of them named after distinguished guests who had occupied them long ago—Camden, Swift, Addison, Butler, Purcell, and others of less note—the lady evincing greater interest in the quaint furniture than in the historical associations to which I endeavoured to direct her attention.

In this way did I amuse my aunt for three hours, conducting her at last through the clean, dry stone crypt, which formed the basement of the house. This crypt was very ancient, being the only unaltered portion of the old abbey which supplied the site, and in part the material, for Holdenhurst Hall. The stonework of the spacious arches seemed quite uninjured by time; and, though they contained much lumber, there still remained ample room for a procession of monks to pass through them. Aunt Gertrude was much interested, and constantly plied me with questions about the habits of the



original ecclesiastical occupants as I preceded her through this strange place, lantern in hand.

"Why is that last arch bricked up?" she inquired.

I looked at the object of her inquiry. "I haven't the remotest idea. I never noticed it before. It is rarely anybody comes down here," I said.

It was now time to prepare for luncheon, and we ascended the steps which led into the house. In the hall we again met my father and uncle.

"Well," asked uncle Sam, addressing his wife, "what do you think of the old place?"

"Very interesting indeed. I have enjoyed myself immensely."

"I am glad to hear it," said my father. "You must be very tired. Luncheon will be served in a few minutes. I have invited the Rev. Mr Fuller."

"The devil you have!" exclaimed uncle Sam. "Is he a good fellow?"

"The Rector of Holdenhurst Major has been my friend for ten years."

"I hate parsons," said uncle Sam.



## VI.

### UNCLE SAM AND THE REV. SILAS FULLER.

A wide experience of the ways of men  
Breeds doubt of all : but who in quietness lives  
Remote from cities, scorns the sceptic's taunts,  
And, trusting all, is steadfast in the faith.

My father's intimation that he had invited the Rev. Silas Fuller to luncheon disturbed me. I knew Mr Fuller very well, and I was beginning to know my uncle a little. Two men differing more widely in habit and opinion it would be difficult to find, and I feared that a conversation between them might afford my father and me more embarrassment than entertainment.

The Rector of Holdenhurst Major was a thin spare man, a little on the wrong side of fifty, short of stature, neat in appearance, formal and precise in manner and speech. The deference which for many years had been paid to this reverend gentleman by the most tractable but ignorant peasantry in England, had bred in him a somewhat dogmatic style. Like most of his class, he had married early in life, choosing for his wife a portionless lady about three times his own size, who, in lieu of dowry, had presented her lord with seven daughters and four sons in the most rapid succession permitted by the laws of Nature. The living of Holdenhurst Major was worth £220 a year in money, with a tolerable house, and five acres of land all told. Such were the means at the disposal of this clergyman of the Church of England, and with them he had to



support himself, his wife, his eleven children, two servants, one pony, one dog, and one cat, as well as take a material interest in the well-being of the poor of the parish—that is to say, of the entire population ; for my father and the Rector were by very much the richest persons in the place. I remember also a canary, said to have been the pet of the eldest daughter, that was once a member of this clerical household ; but it died—whether from the draught through the window, of inanition, or as prey to the hungry cat, I could never correctly ascertain.

I felt that my worst fears were shortly to be realised when—introductions over, seats taken, and grace said—my uncle opened the conversation by inquiring of Mr Fuller how business was looking, hastily correcting his sentence, and substituting “church matters” for “business.”

“I thank you, Mr Truman,” replied the Rector, with great deliberation, as he slowly smoothed the puckers in his waist-coat with his left hand, while his right grasped the wine-glass which he had been about to raise to his lips when addressed ; “I thank you, Mr Truman, for your very kind inquiry. It is very considerate of you to ask such a question. Too little interest is taken in the Church by persons not immediately connected with the Church—far too little interest. Born in the Church, if I may so express myself (for both my father and grandfather held curacies at Splashmire-on-Orwell), and myself, I trust, a conscientious, hard-working minister of the Church, I fully appreciate the comprehensiveness and importance of the question with which you have been so good as to favour me. It is only on the occasion of my visits to the Hall that I find myself in a situation to be so intelligently interrogated. I fear my answer must be somewhat different from that which doubtless your position in life and your proper opinions induce you to desire. The Church, alas ! has many enemies ; and among her enemies are some who should be her friends ; though I rejoice to inform you that we of this district are rather exceptionally free from such adverse influences. The



unprecedented depression in agriculture, however, and the uncertain, though certainly unchristian, procedure of one whom I think, without the remotest exhibition of partisanship, I may stigmatise as the evil genius of England, Mr Glad——”

Mr Fuller had only proceeded thus far with his answer—the bare preliminary to a fifteen minutes’ discourse—when uncle Sam’s impatience, of which I had been watching the growth with alarm, reached an unbearable point, and he cried out—

“Was that your pony I saw coming up the path about half-an-hour ago?”

“It was,” replied the Rector, much surprised at such an extraordinary interruption.

“The animal seems in a very bad condition,” observed uncle Sam.

“Madcap is rather old,” said the Rev. Mr Fuller, looking very uncomfortable; “we have had him a good many years.”

I think it must have occurred to my uncle that the subject of conversation which he had so unwittingly started could not be effectually dismissed in this unceremonious way, for after a brief pause, he himself re-opened it.

“I suppose there are not many prizes in the Church of England, and that the few which exist are well preserved by the *cliques* with a present grasp on them. For a professor of religion, if he has brains, I think, after all, Nonconformity offers the best field; but for a slow man, with a taste for a large family and a dull life, doubtless the Church is best.”

These words plunged my father and me into great confusion of mind. It is true they were spoken by one who knew little or nothing of the circumstances of the Rev. Mr Fuller—who indeed had never so much as heard of that gentleman until an hour before—but their effect was none the less disastrous. My father coughed, I choked, and aunt Gertrude asked me to oblige her by passing the sherry.

“I suppose the collections in a place like this are very trifling,” said uncle Sam.



"We collected £8 last Harvest Thanksgiving," answered the Rector.

"What became of the money?" asked my uncle.

"All our collections are given away in charity. The £8 of which I spoke—the largest collection of the year—was paid over to the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Society."

"Oh, I see," said uncle Sam. "Now this matter of collections in churches is one of the many things which we manage better on the other side of the Atlantic. I am not thinking of Holdenhurst, for of course there is no money here to collect anyway; I am thinking of New York and London. Why, I remember when I was a boy in England in some churches the collecting boxes were fixtures at each side of the door! Could anything have been more absurd? Any effect which the eloquent begging of the preacher had produced died away like the memory of a dream as one walked along the aisles, and the posts supporting the money boxes were passed as heedlessly as the lamp-posts in the street. After that, if I remember rightly, the plan was to place a plateholder at each side of the door. This was better; but the plan had two glaring defects: nothing was easier than for the people in the middle of the stream of passers-out to affect not to see the plates, neither was there any check on the doings of the plateholders. The next plan to be adopted, which I recollect, was the passing of a bag in front of each person present in church. This plan, though an improvement, was not without a serious defect. A penny, skilfully dropped into the bag, chinked as loudly as half-a-crown or a sovereign, and produced as good an effect upon the other occupants of a pew as would have been produced by one or other of the more valuable coins. After a while, plates were substituted for bags, only partly removing this objection; and this, I think, is as far as you have got in England."

"How are collections taken in American churches?" inquired Mr Fuller, with evident interest.

"By the envelope system. Two deacons pass round the



church, the first carrying a tray full of envelopes and a pencil ; the second, an empty tray. Each contributor places his contribution in an envelope, seals it, and writes his name on the outside. Deacon number two collects the filled envelopes, and at the next service the name of each contributor, and the amount of his contribution, is publicly announced, the giver of the largest amount first ; and so on. When there are several persons who each give a like amount, their names are announced in alphabetical order. It is a perfect plan, and I have unqualified admiration for the man who conceived it—he read human nature well. It meets all requirements, and nothing in it can be objected to. The man who wants to advertise himself is invited, as it were, to assist the Church equally with the simple-minded giver—for I assume that the motive for giving signifies nothing so long as the dollars are scooped. Fraud is checkmated, and it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of that ; for surely no one will so abuse his intelligence as to deny that in every congregation Ananias and Barabbas find more imitators than any other Biblical characters.”

“There is certainly a great deal of villainy in the world,” confessed Mr Fuller sadly.

“You would say so with greater emphasis if you were a member of the New York Stock Exchange,” said uncle Sam.

At this stage my father made a commendable but not very successful effort to change the subject of conversation. Aunt Gertrude sat silent and neglected, and everybody in the room except uncle Sam appeared ill at ease. As for myself, I was desperately uncomfortable, and desired nothing so much as the termination of this memorable meal. My uncle, I knew, would not prolong it by one minute—that was not one of his faults—but the Rev. Mr Fuller, who was a miracle of slowness, had to be reckoned with ; and that gentleman ate as leisurely as he talked, which is saying a great deal. After some skilful fencing my father at last diverted his brother’s remarks



from church affairs to decimal coinage, of which monetary system uncle Sam was a redoubtable champion; and from that moment until he rose from the table the guns of his eloquence played mercilessly upon what he was pleased to call the absurd English chaos of fours, twelves, and twenties.

Luncheon over, I sought to create a diversion by reminding my uncle of his engagement to examine the Holdenhurst deeds. He seemed very pleased with my attention to his wishes, and at once followed me into the library, my father and the other two guests adjourning to the drawing-room. It was then I learned that uncle Sam had been in the library with my father in the morning, and had looked through some of the deeds. He spent the whole of the afternoon in completing his examination of them, talking to me on various subjects meanwhile, and amusing me greatly with his blunt candour and his unsparing criticism of village communities in England. His strictures upon the Rev. Mr Fuller were no less amusing than severe, and my sides ached so much from continued laughter that I was much relieved when at last he rose and said—

“There, my boy; I have done. Replace them carefully where you took them from, until I send your father a steel safe worthy to contain them. They are very interesting, and ought to be carefully preserved if only for their historical interest. By-the-bye, your father told me just now that he has invited yet another parson to dine here this evening—the Vicar of Holdenhurst Minor. You know him, of course.”

I replied that I knew him very well indeed.

“I would rather be at war with twenty brokers for a year,” continued uncle Sam, “than talk with a parson for an hour. In a small company it is impossible to ignore an individual member of it, and I could never listen to anything from a parson without replying to it—except in church; and I have often been tempted to do so there. I am afraid I shocked your father somewhat at luncheon; though, Goodness knows, I said nothing either untrue or unreasonable. I speak as I



think, and hope always to do so. However, I intend to be as reserved as my nature will permit at dinner to-day."

This declaration was a distinct relief to me, though in no case should I have much feared a meeting between my uncle and the Rev. Evan Price.

The Vicar of Holdenhurst Minor was a youthful bachelor, and enjoyed an income of £90 a year. There being no vicarage in the parish, the reverend gentleman lodged with a farmer, whose two daughters made it the chief business of their lives to please him. Indeed, the competition among the female community of Holdenhurst Minor and thereabouts for the smiles of the Rev. Evan Price was very keen, a condition of affairs to which the reverend gentleman owed many substantial benefits. Probably no man in England was better provided with slippers than the Rev. Evan Price; and there was a rumour that his name was recorded in the last will and testament of at least one wealthy old maid. The smallness of his income was balanced by his popularity, which was based upon his fine athletic appearance, his affable manner, his skill as a cricketer, and the brevity of his sermons. He had a great many friends and no enemies, and on less than a hundred a year contrived to live better than many another man with an income ten times as large.



## VII.

### CONSTANCE MARSH.

Whose years are few his heart is light,  
His hopes mount high with easy flight,  
And future paths seem smooth and bright,  
And pleasure walks with duty ;  
Kind Nature to his wondering eyes  
Reveals her wealth in varied guise,  
Disclosing last her greatest prize—  
A youthful woman's beauty.

THE visit of my uncle and aunt to Holdenhurst was soon ended. Uncle Sam tried hard to induce my father and me to accompany him to London for a few weeks ; but father would not consent to such an arrangement. Several farms on the estate had been for a long time without tenants, and we were working them ourselves by the aid of a steward. The first week of April had now arrived, and my father did not feel himself justified in leaving the place. He agreed, however, that I should go to London with my uncle and aunt and remain their guest for three weeks, it being further arranged that on the termination of my stay in town, I was to take my father's place at Holdenhurst, while he, in his turn, visited his brother, that our interests in Suffolk might not be left entirely to the care of dependants.

The liberality of uncle Sam astonished everybody with whom he came into contact during his stay in Suffolk, and it would exceed the limits of this chapter to recite his benefactions ; but it is essential to the purpose of these memoirs to refer to a few of the more remarkable.



In addition to clearing off the large mortgage upon the Holdenhurst estate, he paid to the credit of my father's banking account no less a sum than £5000, "for present use," as he said. He advocated the laying waste of every farm in both the Holdenhursts and converting the entire estate into a large park. "That done," said he, "and the Hall thoroughly repaired and partly refurnished, the place will be worth living in for six or eight weeks in each year."

To the first of these proposals my father declined to agree, whereupon uncle Sam remarked that he considered him a fool; but the proposal to renovate the Hall was accepted. Any unfavourable impression which uncle Sam might have created on the mind of the Rev. Mr Fuller at their first meeting was speedily removed when next they met, and my uncle announced his intention, if permitted by his brother, of restoring the church of Holdenhurst Major, an ancient edifice much decayed. The necessary permission being at once given, uncle Sam said he would have the church examined by an ecclesiastical architect, and order the restoration to be made at once. "I don't suppose the job will cost more than £1000 or £1500," said he; whereat Mr Fuller dropped his lower jaw on his white tie, aghast at the presence of a man who could talk so airily of such large sums of money.

The moment of our departure having arrived, our comfortable old carriage, drawn by a pair of greys, stood ready at the door, old John—among whose duties was numbered that of a coachman—sitting on the box. As uncle Sam, aunt Gertrude, my father, and I passed through the hall, my uncle hesitated and stopped. "Where are the servants?" he asked; and being told they were in the kitchen, he desired them to be called. Our entire domestic establishment, consisting of four women and a boy, responded to the invitation. Hastily giving two sovereigns to each of the women, and a half sovereign to the boy, he stayed not to hear their thanks, but handed his wife into the carriage. Uncle Sam and I followed, the driver cracked his whip, and the horses walked slowly down the path



as we waved our hands to my father, who stood outside the house in the porch.

It was some minutes before the Hall was lost to our view, and to the last moment it seemed to engage my uncle's attention. "There, Gertie," said he, pointing to the old house from which we were now rapidly receding; "to think that it was a mere accident—a woman's feeble will—that saved me from spending my life in that place!"

I was surprised and not altogether pleased at hearing my home—where no effort had been spared to make our guests comfortable—spoken of in this contemptuous manner; but I concluded from my uncle's munificence that he was an extraordinarily rich man, accustomed to the best of everything the world could supply, and consequently quite out of his element in a Suffolk village.

"Don't you think, Sam, the antiquated appearance of the old Hall will suffer from the repairs you are going to make?" asked aunt Gertrude.

"Not a bit in the world. The main structure won't be interfered with."

"I think I would prefer it as it is, if it were mine."

"All old places have to be repaired—some of them pretty much and often," said uncle Sam, selecting a cigar from his case. "I don't doubt but Queen Anne would have some difficulty in recognising Windsor Castle, if that lady could come to life again to look at it; it is continually being patched. As for Westminster Abbey, I question if a handful of the original structure remains. A small snuff-box would contain the dust of all the Pharaohs. Everything substantial is transient and passes away. Human nature alone is unaltered and unalterable. Consider that parson Fuller. Two days ago he could hardly disguise his horror of me; yet when I offered to restore Holdenhurst Church, did you notice how his tongue fell out of his mouth as if he wanted to lick my boots on the spot? I suppose the poor devil hopes for a commission from the contractor. Well, I'll see that he's not disappointed."



"Sam, Sam, how you do talk," said his wife reprovingly; then turning to me as I sat silent with folded arms, "I am afraid, Ernest, it will take you some time to understand your uncle. He's awfully cynical; but those who know him best like him best."

I forget what answer I made, but certainly I was not disposed to converse much. The novel experiences of the last few days, and speculations as to my visit to London, engrossed my thoughts. Though I had more than completed nineteen years of life, I had seen little or nothing of the world. Eleven of those years had been passed in a school at Bury St Edmund's, with the exception of the interval between Friday night and Monday morning each week, which was spent at home. During the school holidays my father had been accustomed to take me with him to the seaside—Lowestoft, Yarmouth, Aldborough, or some other of the summer resorts on the East Coast—and occasionally to London. My acquaintance with the world being comprised within these narrow limits, and the present being the first occasion on which, in the ordinary sense of the phrase, I had left home, I was moved to contemplation. Particularly did I regret my defective education—defective because of the idleness of my nature and my love of reading poetry and fiction. I had been well and carefully taught, but was never able to acquire more than a smattering of Latin, Greek, and French, insufficient to enable me to read with interest a book in any of those languages. English I had mastered fairly well, and developed some facility in its composition; while for music it was acknowledged that I had more than ordinary ability. I was painfully conscious that my mental equipment was a very poor one, and wondered whether my uncle would keep much company during his stay in England, what sort of people his friends were, and in what manner they would regard a young gentleman of such slender attainments as mine.

Both my uncle and aunt endeavoured to make me talk, but they were not very successful in their efforts, and little more



was said before our carriage passed rapidly through Northgate Street, Bury St Edmund's, and dashed into the station yard there.

Uncle Sam was the first to alight. "See to your aunt and the luggage there, Ernest," he said, and then ran up the stairs three steps at a time.

"He is always like this when we start on a journey," observed aunt Gertrude, as I assisted her out of the carriage. "We have ten or twelve minutes to spare, and during that time he will despatch at least that number of telegrams. I have never known him to content himself so long without business as during his stay at your house."

The luggage had been labelled and put into the brake, my aunt and I were comfortably ensconced in opposite corners of the first-class compartment which had been specially reserved for us, and the train began to move out of the station before uncle Sam emerged from the telegraph office. But he was equal to the occasion. Jumping lightly into the carriage, he shut the door with a slam, and seated himself as far from us as possible. Begging his wife to entertain me as well as she could, he produced a large pocket-book and pencil, and at once became engrossed in some study, nor did he again open his lips until we reached London.

The changeful weather—exhilarating sunshine alternating with gloomy clouds from which descended heavy showers of rain—greatly interested my aunt, who for my edification compared the climates of England and North America as our train sped through the low-lying Essex meadows. Like most Americans who visit England, she was uncomfortably affected by the chilly dampness of our climate, and visibly shivered, though she was enveloped in a thick wool rug. Though our acquaintance had been so brief, I had developed a very real regard for my youthful American aunt, whose kindly consideration and uniform gentleness excited my admiration. As I scrutinised her delicate features I noted their wistful expression, and experienced a feeling akin to pity for her—for I instinctively



felt there could exist no bond of sympathy between this gentle lady and her husband.

No other part of England is so depressing as the horrid region between Romford and Liverpool Street through which the Great Eastern Railway Company conveys its London-bound victims. Between those places the senses of sight, hearing, and smell are grossly outraged, and when the unfortunate traveller finds himself once more on *terra firma*, he staggers like one awakened from a nightmare, his limbs stiffened by the close packing to which they have been subjected, and his mind and stomach disgusted by the abominations he has seen and sniffed.

It was with great relief we alighted from the train. A splendid carriage awaited us, into which we at once entered, our luggage being piled upon a cab which was to follow. Dark clouds had gathered in all round, and the rain descended in torrents as we drove westwards out of the city. At a few minutes past five P.M.—nearly four hours after we left Holdenhurst Hall—our carriage turned out of the main road into De Vere Gardens, Kensington, and drew up in front of my uncle's house there.

It was a large house, furnished as luxuriously as possible, illuminated throughout by electricity, though here and there was an oil lamp which shed a subdued light on the objects around. Everything in the place seemed absolutely new—as I have no doubt it was—and the best of its kind obtainable, the evidences of wealth on every hand contrasting strongly with my comfortable but unpretentious home in Suffolk.

The footman had just closed the door after admitting us, and I was devoutly hoping that I might neither see nor be seen by my aunt's sister before I had had an opportunity of making myself tolerably presentable—which could certainly not be the case with any one immediately after a seventy-five mile journey on the Great Eastern Railway—when the young lady of whom I was thinking tripped lightly down the stairs, and throwing her arms around my aunt, embraced her in a



manner which drove me wild with envy. The next minute, however, Miss Marsh was herself seized by uncle Sam, who held her gently but with an iron grip while he gave her more kisses than I had presence of mind to count. When at length he desisted, he pointed at me, saying, "There, Connie, my pet; I have brought you home the husband I promised you. What do you think of him? Looks innocent, don't he, Con?" Then, turning to his wife, "Suffolk boys make the best husbands in the world, eh, Gertrude?"

Aunt Gertrude made no reply to this question; a shadow seemed to pass across her face, and she was, I thought, slightly annoyed by her husband's banter. Miss Marsh gave uncle Sam a delightful smack on the face with her narrow little hand, whereat he sought to capture her a second time; but she eluded his grasp and fled up the stairs, her tormentor pursuing her closely. The wondering footman, unused to American society, beheld this undignified reception with an astonished gaze, and then slowly preceded my aunt and me up the stairs.

Matters went smoothly enough after this little incident. There were several telegrams awaiting my uncle, which engaged his attention and kept him quiet while my aunt introduced me to her sister. I found Miss Constance Marsh a charming young lady of about twenty, very like her sister, but of more buoyant spirit; and before I had been in the house an hour we were conversing without restraint, my new acquaintance proving herself a most congenial companion.



## VIII.

### NEWS FROM AUSTRALIA.

A man? Ay, to the ear and eye a man,  
Instinct with reason ; man born to defend  
His complement, and his assistance lend,  
Guarding with all his might a maid or wife  
From perils which beset her chequered life,  
(Too small requital for maternal pain,  
Or sister's love, or husband's precious gain).  
But O when lust all other sense outran  
And ranged uncurbed, then all the Man was lost ;  
Then raged the Beast and then weak woman fell.  
But as the mariner long tempest-tost  
Arrived at last in harbour safe and well  
Ponders his voyage, the spoiler counts the cost  
And thinks of her he thrust from heaven to hell:

TIME passed very quickly with me in my uncle's house. Uncle Sam himself I did not see very often, and never for more than an hour at a time, he was so much engaged in the city ; and when he was at home he seemed to live in a whirlwind of interviews with gentlemen, varied only by an enormous correspondence, written and telegraphic. My uncle's devotion to his affairs did not much affect me ; at least not otherwise than favourably. Aunt Gertrude had brought with her to England introductions to nearly all the best people, the adjective here employed being intended to convey the meaning which London society usually attaches to it ; and she passed a great part of each day calling upon, or receiving at her London home, a large circle of friends of high social rank.



On such occasions her sister and I not infrequently accompanied her ; but we sometimes excused ourselves, and explored London on foot or went for a drive in the park instead.

The favourable impression I had at first conceived of Miss Marsh deepened every day. She was quite as beautiful and intelligent as aunt Gertrude, while she did not appear to be subject to those melancholy moods I had once or twice observed in her sister—a circumstance which, at the time, I attributed to a happy union of youth and health.

One of the first results of my daily companionship with this charming young lady was the opening of a train of serious thought as to my prospects in life. I reflected that I was now nearly of full age, that I had been trained for no trade or profession, and that my fortunes were centred in and bounded by an impoverished estate of £700 a year, between that and myself being the life of my father—a man a little more than a couple of decades older than I, and who my natural affection induced me to hope might live for ever. The prospect dismayed me ; yet I could not choose but consider it whenever I was alone. No definite idea of marriage had ever occurred to me ; but somehow, in a way I cannot explain, there formed in my mind an opinion that it was derogatory to any man to marry a woman whom he was unable to keep in a style at least as good as that to which she had been accustomed in her maiden days, even though that woman were herself rich. And from such thoughts as these my mind would wander to certain fragmentary sentences which had now and again inadvertently fallen from the lips of Miss Marsh, and from which I had calculated that her income was rather more than fifteen times as large as my father's.

Notwithstanding such disquieting considerations, I was, I think, happier than I had ever been before ; and in consequence my days slipped away with a speed which seemed perfectly marvellous.

It was Monday morning. I had been in London a week, and a third part of my visit was spent. My lifelong habit of



rising early had not deserted me in London, and I was standing alone at one of the drawing-room windows admiring the celerity of a postman who was delivering letters at the houses opposite. Soon the postman crossed the road and left a large budget of letters at our house. I had received but one letter since I left Suffolk—a few lines from my father expressive of his satisfaction at my safe arrival in town—and I thought it was likely there might be something for me by this morning's post. Not choosing to wait until breakfast time to satisfy my mind on this point, I descended to the hall and discovered on the table there a large letter addressed to me in my father's handwriting, which I took upstairs to my own room, and read as follows:—

HOLDENHURST HALL,

BURY ST EDMUND'S, April 10, 18—.

MY DEAR BOY,—I am truly sorry to interfere, however slightly, with your enjoyment in town; but, you know, Ernest, you are my only confidant. As your discretion has always appeared quite in advance of your years, I have no hesitation in laying before you a matter which is occasioning me very great anxiety; and in doing so I refrain from insisting upon the importance, at least for the present, of absolute secrecy; for you must, I am sure, at once perceive the necessity for it. The enclosed letter from your grandfather reached me the day before yesterday. Read it carefully, and retain it in your possession until you see me. Of course, I am anxious to do anything in my power to help your grandfather in his trouble; but what is there I can do that is of any use in the circumstances? This is what I want you to consider; and you can either write to me or return to Holdenhurst at once, if only for a day. I would come to London myself and talk the matter over with you, but, as you know, a large staff of workmen is at present engaged about the place, and one or other of us ought to be here. Poor little Annie! My heart bleeds for her unfortunate father; and I fail altogether to understand



the case, for to me she seemed always a most affectionate child. I would ask the advice of my brother how best to proceed were it not for his former affection for your mother, which disinclines me to talk with him of the Wolseys ; he is so much cleverer than I, and would be sure to think at once of what was best to be done. Don't let this matter worry you overmuch, for that more than anything would increase the already great anxiety of your affectionate father,

ROBERT TRUMAN.

Enclosed in the above was a letter which bore the postmark of Sydney, N.S.W. I recognised my grandfather's handwriting at a glance, and, taking the letter from its envelope, read :—

SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES,  
4th March, 18—.

DEAR ROBERT,—I hope you won't think hardly of me for neglecting to write to you such a long while, but I am nigh to being out of my mind with trouble—a condition I have to the present done my best to conceal from every one, especially you. My affairs are now at such a pass that not only is it no longer possible to conceal from you the particulars of the anxiety which is wearing my life away, but I am compelled to solicit your aid in respect of it.

You must know that when, a little more than four years ago, I placed my only surviving child, my dear little Annie, in the great drapery establishment of Milliken & Burton, Oxford Street, London, I acted in accordance with her wishes and my own best judgment. Looking to the slenderness of my resources, the increasing unprofitableness of farming in England, and the insecurity of a young person dependent entirely upon such a life as mine, I decided that I should do well in so placing her ; and she went to London accordingly. All went well for a year, and my poor girl made good progress in her business. I received a letter from her regularly every week, and on three or four occasions when I was in London I saw



her for an hour or so, and was satisfied as to her position. But one day a communication reached me from Messrs Milliken & Burton informing me that my daughter had left their service without notice or assigned reason under circumstances which induced them to entertain grave fears for her safety. The intelligence dismayed me, and I at once prepared for a journey to London that I might, if possible, recover my daughter ; but ere I could begin my journey I received a letter from my child, heart-breaking in its expressions of affection for me, yet begging me to forget her as one utterly unworthy. As if that were possible, and she the only one living of all my children !

In London I could learn little or nothing of my child beyond that she had left her situation in the manner described, and that she appeared well provided with money, having given such small possessions as she had (as well as other presents which she purchased) to some of the young women employed in the same establishment.

You who know so well how deeply I loved my child—you who are also the father of an only child—will realise as perhaps no third person could how complete was my desolation. I resolved to cease my efforts to recover my child from the villain who has betrayed her only when my life shall cease ; and I accordingly left Holdenhurst as you know. I have traced her to Liverpool, but too late to see her—to Brighton, Leamington, Derby, and other places in England ; but was decoyed by a clever stratagem into a journey to New Zealand, and by another stratagem no less artful, into coming to Australia ; though I am now of opinion that my daughter has never left her country.

Some of the circumstances attendant on the pursuit in which I am engaged are so very extraordinary that I am quite baffled by them. Though I have been unable by any means in my power to discover where my daughter is, my address, wherever I go, is known to her, and a letter from her, fully and correctly addressed, reaches me regularly at intervals of about six weeks.



Her letters come from all parts of the world ; but I am now satisfied that they are sent to the places where they are posted merely to disguise the whereabouts of the writer, and think it is probable she is in England in the neighbourhood of London. Last year when I was ill in Wellington, New Zealand, the particulars of my illness were known to her, and she wrote to me more frequently than usual. Only once since she went away did she fail to write to me for three months, and then came a long letter, couched in terms more than usually affectionate, informing me that she had been ill but was now recovered ; that there was nothing she desired more than to see me again ; but that if she could not ask my forgiveness in the character of a wife, she would not ask it in the character of a mother.

I am convinced that my girl is well treated, so far as is possible under any such arrangement as that to which she is a party. I forgive her the step she has taken from my very heart, though I regret it as keenly as any father could. Were I to see her or write to her I should tell her this, and use no word of reproach.

And now for the aid I require from you. I have noticed that the letters which reach me from Annie are enclosed in envelopes embossed at the extreme edge of the opening, "Dickenson, Maker, Richmond, Surrey." That you may not fail to understand my meaning, I enclose one of the envelopes. From this evidence I have formed the opinion that she lives in Richmond or thereabouts ; and I want you, if you will, to institute a secret inquiry—personally, if you can conveniently do so—to ascertain this positively ; but you must be careful that she does not see you, or before I could return to England she would be gone. Should you discover her, you might telegraph to me ; but if you fail to do so, a letter will serve, addressed Box 2847, Post Office, Sydney, N.S.W. I am anxious to avoid returning to England unless there is a good chance of achieving my object ; and this for several reasons, of which economy is not the least, for I have not found it easy to



travel as I have done on an income less than £200 a year—though of this I make no complaint. If only I might see and talk with my Annie once more, I could die content.

With every good wish for yourself and my grandson Ernest—who must be almost, if not quite, a man now—and assuring you both that I have never ceased to think of you notwithstanding my long silence, I remain, always yours faithfully,

WILLIAM WOLSEY.

The letter fell from my hands, and I sat for some minutes lost in thought. That the playmate of my childhood, she who had always been to me as a sister rather than the relation she really was, should have fallen so low, filled me with sadness; while I could not but feel extreme pity for my grandfather in his desolation. Thoughts of the happy Saturdays in summer when, with little Annie for my companion, I had wandered through the Suffolk groves in search of nuts, or chased her among the neglected gravestones in Holdenhurst Churchyard, of her bright eyes, rosy cheeks, and happy smile, crowded upon my mind. And I thought, too, of the stalwart old man who had taught me to ride and shoot; whom I had accompanied I know not how many times to Bury market in his village cart, picturing him now as white-haired and bowed with care. I know not how long my reverie lasted; but when I was recalled to myself by a summons to breakfast, I started up, full of energy, resolved to do whatever might lie in my power to satisfy the pathetic appeal I had just read.

My uncle and aunt and Miss Marsh were already seated when I entered the breakfast-room. Uncle Sam was stirring his coffee vigorously, and appeared even more vivacious than usual. "What!" he exclaimed, as I entered the door, "one week in London and your country habits already lost! Why, I thought you were an early riser. Come, Ernest, what have you to say for yourself?"

"Only that I have been up for nearly two hours."



"Two hours!" echoed uncle Sam incredulously; "why, what have you been doing?"

I replied that I had been reading my letters. The declaration mystified uncle Sam still more. He said he had himself sorted all the letters which had arrived, and there appeared to be none for me. My explanation of this. I thought, was not very pleasing to my uncle; for after remarking that whatever might be the nature of my correspondence it did not seem very beneficial to me, for I looked very pale over it, he opened the *Times* its full width and said no word more during breakfast.

"You certainly have lost your colour this morning," remarked aunt Gertrude; "are you quite well, Ernest?"

"Yes, I think so," I replied; and when the next minute Miss Marsh proposed that I should go with her for a long drive I had no further doubt in the matter.



## IX.

### RECALLED TO SUFFOLK.

Most subtle power by Nature lent,  
By thy fell sway man moves or stands ;  
Thou much canst do but more prevent—  
Gold, barrier of hearts and hands !

As soon as breakfast was over uncle Sam left his house to go to Capel Court, aunt Gertrude retired to her room to attend to her correspondence, and Miss Marsh and I were left alone.

"Where shall we go this morning, Ernest?" asked Miss Marsh; "I am tired of the park, and we have driven all over Kensington more than once."

Miss Marsh had lately learned to address me as Ernest, which had greatly delighted me, and determined me henceforth to call her Constance.

"Wherever you please; but if it is agreeable to you, we will go to Richmond. We have plenty of time," I said, consulting my watch; "it is barely ten o'clock, and we do not lunch till two. I was never there, but I have often heard that Richmond is the most beautiful suburb of London."

"By all means," replied Miss Marsh; "I will order the carriage and get ready at once." And she rose instantly and tripped lightly from the room.

American ladies prepare their toilettes with a despatch quite unknown to their English sisters, though certainly with no less care and elaboration; and I had only written a telegram to my father, acknowledging the receipt of his letter and promising to reply to it that evening, when Miss Marsh again entered



the room, fully equipped for a drive, no button of her glove being left for me to fasten.

I looked up at her with some surprise. "You are soon returned," I observed.

"Too soon?" she asked, fixing upon me her steadfast eyes.

"No, how could that be?" I said; and I drew her arm through mine and led her downstairs.

"Good morning, Mr Ernest," exclaimed a voice belonging to a tall form which stood in the shadow of the hall door; "I am fortunate in not having just missed you," and turning round I beheld the Rev. Evan Price.

"Pray don't let my unexpected presence startle you," continued the Vicar of Holdenhurst Minor; "I bring no ill news. Being summoned to London on business which may end in my appointment to the curacy of All Souls', North Brixton, your father has asked me to call here to say that he would like you to return home at once for a day or so. He would like you to catch the train which leaves St Pancras at 11.45, and travel *viâ* Cambridge."

This information annoyed me greatly. I could not find it in my heart to keep away from my father when he desired my presence, though to forego my visit to Richmond with Miss Marsh was a bitter disappointment to me. For a moment I stood in doubt how to act.

"Of course you will go," remarked Miss Marsh.

"I fear I must," I replied, in a voice which but ill concealed my vexation; "but I will return to-morrow, or next day at latest. I am sorry to leave you in this abrupt manner, and I am sure my father would be the last to desire such a thing without very good reason for it."

We adjourned to the drawing-room, whither Miss Marsh invited Mr Price to accompany us, an invitation which he accepted with great promptitude and courtliness. He was a man of fine presence and considerable tact, gifted with the power of talking interminably but interestingly about everything



in general and nothing in particular. Indeed, nothing was more admired by the feminine world of the two Holdenhursts than the genial affability of the Rev. Evan Price. This handsome and gallant cleric had not been in the house ten minutes before I learned that he was to have an interview with the Bishop of London at Fulham at three o'clock, until which hour he was at leisure (which being interpreted signified that he intended to stay until then); that after the said interview he would return to pay his respects to Mr Samuel Truman—in other words, that he would come back to dinner. When I quitted the drawing-room, leaving Mr Price and Miss Marsh together, I was more depressed than I had ever been before, and half regretted that I had not decided to remain. I felt like a runner who, having kept ahead of his competitors in a long race, faints when near the goal and sees the prize he regarded as his own seized by other hands. I am almost ashamed to record how the tears started to my eyes; but I forced them back, summoned all the courage of my nature—not at that time very much—and after a severe mental struggle fell into a strange mood compounded of pride and fierceness.

It was with some difficulty that I contrived to speak to Miss Marsh alone before I left; but I succeeded in doing so, and again assured her of my regret at the unexpected interruption of our arrangements; and I laid special emphasis on the great pleasure it would give me to return to Kensington at the earliest possible moment, at the same time desiring her to inform my uncle and aunt of the hasty summons I had received from my father.

Miss Marsh was as gracious to me as the most exacting lover could expect or desire, waiving my apologies as unnecessary, promising to convey my message, regretting my sudden departure, hoping for my speedy return, and permitting me to retain her hand in mine longer than is customary in the farewells of mere friends. She also suggested that I might write to her if I did not return in two days; a suggestion which I assured her I would most certainly adopt, at the same



moment resolving to do so under any circumstances. I would have given the world if only I might have kissed her, but I did not dare to do so. Uttering a final farewell, I regarded her with great earnestness for a few moments, then released her hand and hurriedly left the house.

The course of my life seemed to have changed entirely in fourteen days. Never before had my mind been filled by so many or such conflicting ideas. Before my uncle came to Holdenhurst I had been idle and careless; now my head ached from consideration of affairs of which I could conceive no satisfactory issue. One thing, however, was clear to me. In only a few days I had grown to love Miss Marsh with a devotion more intense than I had supposed my nature permitted; and short as our acquaintance had been, I would have asked that lady, before obeying my father's urgent call, to become my wife but for that formidable barrier between us—her wealth. Her eyes' speechless messages, an occasional phrase or word from her lips, or, rarer still, her gentle touch, had assured me that my suit would accord with the dictates of her own heart. But my pride was as great as my love, and I felt strongly that I could never ask a woman of enormous wealth to become the wife of the portionless son of an impoverished squire. Without commercial training, and with no natural aptitude for business, there was absolutely no hope for me to raise myself to her social plane by any effort in my power to make, and in bitterness of spirit I alternately cursed her wealth and my poverty. Visions of the perfect happiness which might be mine were either of these difficulties removed served only to increase my depression. As my uncle's carriage sped towards St Pancras, Browning's remarkable line,

“Money buys women,”

kept ringing in my ears, tormenting me like an evil sprite. Then there was that smart young cleric, the Rev. Evan Price. With the Rev. Evan Price I had had very little to do, and our communications had always been of the most friendly character



possible, but Heaven, how I hated him now! and with what fiendish delight I was contemplating his extreme poverty when the thought that he was probably at the point of greatly increasing his income and of residing permanently in London promptly punished me for my uncharitableness, and I winced. In the chaos of my ideas I did not forget Annie Wolsey, the unfortunate playfellow of my childhood, whose youthfulness had always prevented me regarding her as an aunt; nor did I forget my grandfather, anxious and alone, as far from home as could be; nor my indulgent father, now expecting my return; but I do not much doubt that these considerations were of a minor sort, and that the central figure in my mind which occasioned my cerebral disturbance was Constance Marsh, and no other.

My uncle's horses were good ones, and soon conveyed me to the Midland terminus; but I had no time to spare. Having bought my ticket, I sought for an empty compartment, for I felt averse to staring at strangers, after the manner of English travellers, for three hours; while to listen to conversation in which I was not interested would have been simply unendurable. There being no compartment without passengers, I selected the one which contained the fewest—an old lady, attended by a young maid. In my abstraction I left my Gladstone bag on the platform, where, after the train was well in motion, it was noticed by my uncle's groom, who contrived to thrust it through the window, so that it fell on the floor at the feet of the old lady, causing her to shriek appallingly.

I apologised for the clumsiness of the servant, and for my own forgetfulness, which had caused the incident; but despite all I could say, and the careful ministrations of her maid, the old lady continued to roll her eyes, to pant, and to utter strange sounds, until at last I thought she had suffered some serious injury. When she perceived that I was really alarmed the old lady recovered herself with surprising suddenness, and remarked that the bag had not touched her, but that it nearly fell on her feet, in which case it would have been impossible to



tell what might have happened. She then requested her maid to hand her a certain flask. This command was more easily given than obeyed, for the flask, it appeared, was at the bottom of a closely-packed hand-portmanteau, which had to be emptied before the article wanted could be got at. The old lady scolded her maid terribly because of the delay; and when the maid timidly ventured to observe that the flask had been the first thing to be placed in the portmanteau in accordance with her own repeated injunctions, went into a violent passion, and declared that she never had and never would allow a servant to answer her. When at last the flask was obtained, the old lady at once applied it to her lips, the odour of brandy pervaded the carriage, and her rubicund features relaxed into a smile.

It was not long before the old lady exhibited symptoms of an intention to open a conversation with me; but I checkmated her by taking from the Gladstone bag which had occasioned this flutter a thick folio volume of manuscript—the book I had found in the copper box when I was getting out the Holdenhurst deeds for uncle Sam. I had brought this book with me to London, intending to carefully examine it and read so much of it as was English during my stay in my uncle's house. But if I could find no convenient opportunity to do so at Holdenhurst while uncle Sam and aunt Gertrude were there, it is certain I could not in London, with Miss Marsh in the same house engrossing all my attention; and the book had not only been in my possession for nearly a fortnight without being opened, but had narrowly escaped being lost. Settling myself comfortably in a corner of the carriage, I determined to study the volume until I arrived in Bury St Edmund's, and thus keep off any advances the tyrannical old lady might make towards a conversation, and divert my thoughts from my affairs.

The manuscript was still very damp, and great care was necessary in separating the leaves without tearing them. It appeared to be nothing more than the commonplace book of



my ancestor Roger Trueman (for so he and others of his period wrote our family name). The handwriting was large and distinct; but the letters, though uniform, were quaint and peculiar—they approximated more nearly to modern than ancient forms. A large number of pages were devoted to records of chemical experiments, with notes of the results; and here and there a few lines in some Eastern language of which I was ignorant even of the name, though I guessed it was Turkish, from the writer having lived in Turkey. I examined each page in regular succession, and found that they were all of similar character, until I had exhausted about two hundred pages, or nearly a third of the book. The pages were now filled with close writing, unbroken by paragraphs, and the headline, "Record of a Wasted Life: Roger Trueman, his history; written with his own hand, A.D. 1671," absorbed my attention, and I became oblivious of the voluble tongue of the old lady lecturing her maid, and, however uninteresting it may be to other readers, read with absorbing interest what I copy in the three following chapters.



X.

RECORD OF A WASTED LIFE:

ROGER TRUEMAN, HIS HISTORY; WRITTEN WITH HIS OWN  
HAND, A.D. 1671.

*November 12.*—All men being at all times like to die, the robust no less than the sick, it falleth out that but few men are troubled by contemplation of that circumstance; and indeed I have ever noted, but more particularly among such as hold by the Mohammedan faith, that the inevitable is generally accepted with stoicism or indifference, and that death by natural progression hath no terrors at all. That such is my own case this present writing shall testify. He who hath exceeded the span of life allotted to man by the Psalmist; he who for many years hath lived among a strange people in a strange land; he who, having become a recluse, perceiveth now his physical and mental powers to grow feebler day by day; who, hoping for nothing, feareth naught, is not tempted to lie. He who lies, lieth for his advantage, or for what he conceiveth to be such. To this dictum, I will admit no exception—and I have had large acquaintance of men of divers nations and qualities, so speak knowingly. And for what purpose should I record of myself that which is untrue, seeing that my earthly course is so nearly outrun; that certainly this record will go unread of any until after I am in my grave, and may perhaps moulder to dust ere other eyes than mine shall look upon it? Should I in such circumstances wittingly chronicle the thing which is false, then of all lies lied by lying man from the first man to the latest born on earth, this record



would be the farthest removed from truth ; its gross impertinence would at once astound and appal, and the Master Liar would pause among his angels aghast at being eclipsed by his lieutenant. I write only to assist my mind in reviewing past experiences and not to convince any man of any matter, my business with men being past, and there remaining nothing for me to gain or lose by them.

I was born in England in the year of Christ 1600, that year being the forty-first of the reign of the virgin Queen Elizabeth, in my brother's house, where I at present live—which is to say, in the manor house of Holdenhurst, by Saint Edmund's Bury in the county of Suffolk—and am the younger of the two sons of Christopher Trueman and Barbara, his wife. The two manors of Holdenhurst, bestowed on my family by the eighth Henry, would have supported the dignity of a baronet ; but my father, unlike his predecessors, sought for no public employment, and viewed with indifference the acquisition of the highest honours by men of meaner birth, living in peace and content upon his paternal acres at a stirring period when the fate of his country trembled in the balance. Both my parents having died at an early age, my brother succeeded to the estate, and treated me with extraordinary liberality, permitting me to share with him equally in all that he had—except the anxieties and vexations which accompany the possession of property, and those he generously kept for himself. When he took to himself a wife, my brother abated nothing of his kindness to me ; but I was deprived of much of his company. This event took place in 1620, the twenty-fifth year of my brother's life, and of mine the twentieth.

Now it so chanced that immediately or soon after the marriage of my brother I conceived a very violent and all-absorbing passion for a certain maid, who, even at the time I was so seized, I could not but acknowledge possessed nothing uncommon in beauty, talent, or fortune. Nevertheless, for some reason which remains unknown to me to this day, I loved her with an intensity of devotion which might be



equalled, but could never be exceeded. My suit was well received; and one day, in response to my request that she would become my wife, she sent me a missive, couched in loving terms, wherein she professed herself very willing to accord with my wish, subscribed "Your loving wife that is to be." The messenger who brought this gratifying epistle could hardly have returned to her ere I received another letter from the same source. It ran thus, or nearly thus: "Think of me no more—try to forget me. Do not write or come to me. I can never be your wife," and appended was the signature of she whom I had preferred before all women. I knew not what to make of this, so paused, thinking one of us must be mad, and endeavouring to decide who was that one; but I failed. Then followed the only occasion in my life when I went where I had been definitely told I was not wanted. I sought my promised wife, found her, and talked with her; but she would not acquaint me with the cause of her perjury, contenting herself with the assertion that it must be so. I left her, not hating her—I could not bring myself to that—but with a cynical, albeit illogical, contempt for all women—contempt which I retained for many years after the intense feeling I once had in this matter had quite died out. Shafts propelled by the envious fates against the young and vigorous do not often probe deeply, but for the most part fall to the ground blunted. Not many months had elapsed ere I began to consider myself fortunate in having escaped an alliance which I had recently contemplated with so much satisfaction, perceiving that a woman who will deceive one man will as readily deceive two or more men: so that when soon afterwards I learned of her marriage to another, my only emotion was sympathy for the man who had won her love—that is, supposing that she had any love in her nature; or, having it, suffered it to control her in her choice of a husband.

But contempt for women had become ingrained with me. I recognised them as hygienic and maternal necessities, but could not regard as serious anything any woman might say; at



the same time holding it right and proper to employ any means for their subjugation to my desires. I am aware that my conduct was as illogical as that of the apocryphal debtor who robbed Peter to pay Paul ; but such it was, and it must be noted as well as other circumstances of my career.

With his usual kindly solicitude for my welfare, my brother advised me to travel, conceiving that familiar intercourse with strange nations, and the view of distant cities and wonders of nature, was medicine suited to my malady (for I had fallen into a melancholy mood) ; and to that end gave me a thousand pounds, and took great pains to furnish me with letters of recommendation to persons of consideration abroad. The Earl of Arlington, whose estate lay contiguous to the Holdenhursts, was our friend, and being high in the King's counsels, it was in his power to help us much. The earl generously lent his aid, and procured for me letters to the English ambassadors at Paris and Constantinople, and to the most considerable merchants in the principal cities of Europe, of which it is only necessary that I should specify one—that addressed to Signor Pietro Simona, shipowner, of Venice. Thus provided, I bade a tender farewell to my brother, and, taking horse, set out on my travels, unaccompanied by a servant. In eight days I reached Dover, having journeyed by way of London, quite safely and without adventure. At Dover I sold my horse to an innkeeper, who at first offered me a tenth of his value, and when I refused it threatened to carry me before a justice of the peace and accuse me of having stolen the horse. I told him he was an impudent rogue, and that if I had the pleasure of appearing before a justice in his company, I had influence in my pocket sufficient to hang him on the nearest gallows for so insolently aspersing the character of an honourable gentleman ; whereon I pulled out of a satchel which depended from my girdle a passport signed by King James, with His Majesty's seal attached. When he looked on this document the innkeeper turned pale and trembled, and without further ado told out from a long purse as much money



as I had asked for the horse, and withal shared with me a quart of choice canary at his own expense.

After diligent inquiry I obtained an introduction to the captain of a barque, who designed to presently proceed to Calais, and he contracted to transport me to France for twenty shillings. It was two days before we set sail, and the barque was no sooner at sea than the wind proved contrary, and we beat about the coast of Thanet in imminent peril for a day and a night. I was sore sick from the turbulence of the sea, and almost starved ; for my inclination for food was but small, and the only victual aboard musty biscuit and sour wine. After two days of dire misery I was carried ashore, more dead than alive, at Dunkirque, where I recovered my wonted health very speedily, though I soon came near to losing it again by a surfeit of oysters and onions prepared for me by a fishwife of that town. My clothes were torn and spoiled by the buffetings I had sustained in the barque, so I bought me others of French make, which served excellently for a long time, being exceeding strong, though such as would denote a French mariner rather than an English gentleman making the grand tour. When I was perfectly recovered from the ill effects of my voyage I bought a horse and set out for Paris, spending my money with great economy on the way, and carefully avoiding such company as I judged might be dangerous for the safety of my thousand pounds, into which I had dipped but sparingly as yet : and I doubt not my security had an additional warrant in the fact that I was tall and muscular, at any time prepared for combat with the best man in France. In this manner did I journey across the continent of Europe, staying many days in the fine cities of Rouen, Paris, Dijon, Geneva, Turin, Milan, Verona, and Padua, observing all that is remarkable therein ; and so at last came to Venice, fair city of the waters. Inasmuch as Venice is beautiful beyond the power of words to depict, and I had been travelling with but brief rests for seven months, I purposed living among the Venetians one whole summer at least ; and so indeed it fell out, as shall presently appear.



I had always heard that Venice was the most beautiful city of Italy, quite fascinating the stranger, who revelled in a constant succession of delightful surprises as he paced her stately squares and colonnades or luxuriously glided over the surface of her wonderful canals, with sky of unbroken azure above, and historic palaces around ; and so indeed I found it. Here, therefore, I resolved to stay until I had mastered the Italian tongue, of which at present I knew only inconsiderable fragments, picked up haphazard since I had come to Italy ; and I rightly appreciated my want when I presented my letters to Signor Simona, who spake no English. French I could speak tolerably well before I left England, thanks to Monsieur Felix Lamonte, who, when I was a pupil at King Edward's Grammar School, Bury St Edmund's, impressed upon me the irregularities of French verbs by the regularity of his floggings, which were frequent and severe. Touching this Monsieur Lamonte, I retain to this day a vivid recollection of his skill in tying up birch rods (for he would use none but those he had made himself), of the graceful curves described by his right arm when he flogged any of his pupils, and of his boast that he could produce by six strokes a posterioral agony as exquisite as an English master could produce by a dozen. Though in bitterness of spirit I had often cursed Monsieur Lamonte, I had of late had cause to think more charitably of him, for he was a good teacher, and I now experienced the convenience of his lessons as much as I formerly did the inconvenience of his methods of imparting them. It was a great boon to me to be able to converse with Signor Simona, who was a good French scholar, which would not have been the case if I had been ignorant of French.

When first I beheld Signor Pietro Simona, I was deeply impressed by his venerable aspect. His years then numbered as many as mine do now, which is to say seventy-one ; but he appeared much older, his vitality being sapped by his intense application to affairs of commerce in early manhood and middle age, and by stress of recent sorrow, to say nothing of



the natural ravages of time. Nevertheless he exhibited traces of a nobility of features and stature which an attenuated face and bowed back failed to obliterate. The moment of my introduction to him was a painful one, for he had just returned from celebrating the obsequies of his son, and his only remaining child, the young and beautiful Anita, was administering to her father such comfort as was possible in the circumstances. I had entered the presence of the old man, and presented my letters, before I was acquainted with his unhappy condition; but so soon as I was informed of it, I sought to withdraw until a more fitting occasion should offer. The fair Anita, perceiving that my business might divert her father's thoughts from the object of his grief, would not willingly suffer me to depart; so I yielded to her solicitation and remained. My host was a man of extraordinary intelligence, delightfully frank and communicative, notwithstanding a quiet dignity which usually accompanies a combination of wealth and intellectual power. Of his grief he spake not, but I observed all too many evidences of it. After some conversation with him on general matters, it was easy for me to understand how this man had from humble beginnings risen to be the most opulent shipowner in Venice. When I asked his advice in respect of a house wherein to live during my sojourn in Venice, the old man regarded me with mild surprise. "I know of no other than this," he said; "who comes from England with credentials such as yours must be my guest." These words afforded me great content, and in Signor Simona's house I accordingly took up my abode.

*November 13.*—A thorough mastery of the Latin and French tongues helped me greatly in acquiring the Italian speech: *sans* such equipment I doubt not I should have failed, for my method of learning differed greatly from what is prescribed by the schools. Signorina Anita Simona was my instructress, and her lessons occupied nearly the whole of every day. She told me the names of things, and corrected my errors of pronunciation, but of grammatical rules she spake not; I fear she had



but scant knowledge of them herself. Though no Catholic, I went with her each morning to mass, which pleased her greatly, for she had a superstitious horror of Protestantism. And here I may remark upon the convenience of conforming to the religious prejudices of the people among whom one may be cast; it is both easy and politic, and may be done by most travellers without strain, for but few men have settled convictions on the subject. For my part, I confess that at the period of which I write, and for long after, I had none at all.

My days in Venice passed with great swiftness, as days of pleasure always do. Signor Simona was a merchant prince, and his marble palace was a storehouse of works of art brought by his captains from all the countries of the world. His kindness to me was very marked, and that of his daughter yet more so. After many weeks of daily expeditions to examine the wonders of Venice, in all of which I was accompanied by the daughter of my host, the beautiful Anita showed in many ways that she had fallen in love with me; and this circumstance occasioned me much disquiet. If I but talked with any other woman, or ventured to express admiration of a costume worn by one of the Dogaressa's maids, her pearly teeth would clench and her dark eyes flash. It was a great difficulty, and hastened my departure from Venice, with strange consequences disastrous to herself. I would not love her in dishonourable fashion, for the sake of her father, my host; nor would I marry her, for I had previously resolved to measure the faith of all women by the perfidy of one, and my unreasonable distrust was as yet unabated.

When in a confidential mood (which was frequent with him), Signor Simona had informed me that he was owner of only half the vast business he conducted, his equal partner being one Mario Battista, a Venetian merchant who had been for many years located at Constantinople, where he was busied with affairs such as he was himself engaged with at Venice. It was the wish of Signor Simona to transmit a great treasure of money to his partner, and he was in doubt how to do so



with assurance of its safety. On two previous occasions when he had essayed to send much smaller sums to his partner, his captains and sailors had treacherously betrayed their trust, and gone off with the money to some small island in the Mediterranean, or to the North-West coast of Africa, and there become pirates; but goods, however valuable, he had never lost in this way. The occasion, I thought, afforded an excellent opportunity for me to serve the interests of my host, and in so doing to reach Constantinople without expense to myself; and I was besides anxious to be gone from Venice that I might be rid of the amorous attentions of Anita, which I found much difficulty in resisting. Nevertheless, for her father's sake, and for no other reason, I spared her. It was in these circumstances that I acquainted Signor Simona with my intention to visit Constantinople, at the same time showing him my passports, and my letter of introduction to Sir Thomas Roe, English Ambassador to the Porte, signed by King James's own hand. If he would fit out and man a frigate for Constantinople, I would, I said, gladly make the voyage therein, the money being packed and treated as my baggage, but none the less faithfully delivered by me to Signor Mario Battista immediately on my arrival in that city. My host was delighted with my offer, and that same day gave orders for a frigate to be made ready for sea, as I had suggested. He also caused ten chests to be made of stout ebony, lined with sheet lead and bound on the outside with bands of copper. Each chest was of about one cubit foot content, and into each Signor Simona packed with his own hands 25,000 gold sequins. When all the chests were filled, they were fastened with screws, the copper bands made fast with metal studs, and the whole coated with a resinous black paint, to which later was added my name, in white characters, upon each.

When the design of my journey to Constantinople became known to Anita, she opposed it with all her wit, and exhibited a great wealth of artifice in her efforts to prevent it. She represented to her father how essential was a change of



scene to one who, like himself, had lived long and worked hard in one place, and who was besides suffering from recent bereavement ; from which she argued that he would do well in going himself to Constantinople, more especially as she was capable, with my protection, of taking charge of his house and affairs. But finding that the old man could not be persuaded to undertake so perilous a voyage, she changed her tactics, and after some honeyed compliments concerning my honour and probity, endeavoured to show that it was unfair to Signor Battista to entrust a great treasure in which he had a half interest to the custody of one who was entirely unknown to him, and whom he (Simona) himself had known but little more than a hundred days, and that his merchant wisdom would be more apparent in devising some other and more regular means of getting the money to Constantinople. This advice being also rejected, she feigned illness, kept to her bed, and inflicted upon her aged father such fears for her life that he despatched a special courier to Padua to fetch a learned leech of that city. Several days passed before the leech reached Venice, and when he came he made but a hasty and superficial examination of the patient. "Your daughter," said the leech to Signor Simona, "is suffering from an indeterminate languishment and may die at any time ; the best thing for her is a prolonged cruise in the Mediterranean ; by such means her life may be spared for many years." When Signor Simona acquainted me with what the leech had prescribed for his daughter I perceived at once what had happened. Clearly Signorina Anita's courier had sped faster than her father's, and this was a prescription which had been first dictated by the patient to the prescriber. Matters fell out as I expected they would. A week before the frigatoon was ready to put to sea, Signor Simona took me aside, and after profuse expressions of his affection for me, said he had resolved to entrust me not only with his money but his daughter also, and straightway unfolded his desire that Signorina Anita should accompany me to Constantinople for the benefit of her health. I had expected as much, and was



not surprised, though I heartily wished the Italian girl at the devil. To have raised any objection to the proposal would have savoured of an intent on my part to feloniously make off with a quarter of a million gold sequins, so I accepted the situation with the best grace I could command, at the same time resolving that so soon as I had delivered my charge to Signor Battista, I would send the subtle Anita back to Venice in her father's frigate, and pursue my travels as I had originally planned them in England.



## XI.

### ROGER TRUEMAN: HIS RECORD CONTINUED.

*November 14.*—The frigatoon *Orio Malipietro* was a noble craft, well found and in all respects fit. I went with my worthy host to see her while she lay in the arsenal where three centuries before the fumes of boiling pitch had assailed the nostrils of the immortal Florentine. A swarm of workmen were busy about her, and the arrangements for the comfort of her two passengers surpassed anything of the kind I had seen or supposed possible. Two stately cabins had been specially constructed, one fore and one aft; they were divided by a spacious general cabin, and both richly furnished with all things needful for comfort. The crew consisted of seventeen men; that is to say, of Captain Jacopo Perugia—a fine man of sixty or thereabouts, who had served Signor Simona for forty years—and sixteen sailors. The fore cabin was assigned to me, the after cabin to Signorina Simona and her maid. In all there was accommodation for a score of souls. Signor Simona introduced Captain Perugia to me as a man of whose fidelity and good seamanship he had had frequent proofs, and assured me that he had voyaged so many times between Venice and Constantinople that he could safely navigate the Grecian archipelago without a chart; whereat I scrutinised narrowly the face and head of the captain thus appraised, and was satisfied that he deserved his master's testimonial.

Notwithstanding that its owner spared no expense, the fitting out of the *Orio Malipietro* proceeded slower than I could have wished, and three weeks passed before she was ready for sea.



And here again I perceived the hand of Signorina Anita, who had divers women at work making clothes which she desired not to depart without, but could not sooner get completed. Signor Simona was a shrewd man, well versed in the ways of his kind, yet in dealing with his daughter he was but as clay in the hands of the potter, so great is the blindness of a fond parent.

At last the day came when Captain Perugia reported to Signor Simona that his frigatoon lay ready to sail with the first favourable wind, that her cargo of merchandise was well and safely stored, and all his daughter's baggage aboard. It was then that Signor Simona ordered the ten chests of sequins to be placed upon the floor of my cabin, where I should have them constantly in sight, and gave me a sealed letter for delivery with the chests to Signor Mario Battista of Constantinople. He commended his daughter to my care, and both our lives and fortunes to the protection of Holy Mary, in a manner so natural and affecting that but few persons could have witnessed the scene unmoved. As for Anita, she wept abundantly, and showed either great filial devotion or consummate skill in acting. And the wind now serving, the *Orio Malipietro* stood out to sea.

It was with strange emotions, not unmixed with sadness, that I watched the spires and campaniles of Venice wax dimmer and yet more dim as the swelling sails of the *Orio Malipietro* bore us south-eastward along the Adriatic, and I could not repress thoughts of all which had happened to me since I first set foot in that marvellous city, so appropriately called the bride of the sea. Anita noticed my abstraction, and, with the admirable tact which seems to pertain only to feminine natures, sought to dispel it by engaging me in conversation. Poor Anita! I pitied her greatly, for she had fixed her affections on one who had determined not to reciprocate them—on a man who had never so much as spoken to her of love; and for him had she abandoned her aged father (for whom I am sure she had a real affection), and



had embarked on a perilous journey under circumstances the most damaging to her reputation. Had I never suffered such treatment as befell me at the hands of a woman in England, I should probably have been content with this brave young Venetian lady for a wife, for I doubted not she was as faithful as she was persistent; but my English affair still rankled in my heart, and my oath to Heaven never to regard any woman other than a minister of transient delight in whom no faith should be put was too recently registered to be lightly broken.

Our progress was extremely slow, and suffered several interruptions; but I regretted it not, for the month was June, and the seas on which we sailed locked by the most beautiful lands in the world. Truly the ancients did well in calling the Mediterranean such; it was a compliment—not an error, as some have affirmed. Stoppages were made at Trieste, Fiume, Zara, Ragusa, and other places, and sundry merchandises delivered to divers traders in those places who dealt in Venetian commodities. It was on the sixteenth day after our departure from Venice when we put off from Lemnos, and all had gone well with us in that time. Our journey being almost accomplished, I sat in my cabin cogitating how I might with the least harshness return Anita to her father; for I had gathered from her discourse that she entertained the hope of my returning with her to Venice in the *Orio Malipietro*; and that, if disappointed in that expectation, she was prepared to accompany me for so long as I chose to travel in the dominions of the Great Turk. Now I was fully determined neither to do the one nor permit the other; but concerning the manner of acquainting Anita with my resolve I stood in pause. Weakness is a fatal thing, and I cursed my folly in leaving Venice in circumstances such as to involve me in this dilemma, and saw clearly, now that it was too late, that my proper course was to have plainly told Signor Simona that I had no feeling for his daughter other than that of common friendship, and to have left Venice as I had entered it—alone. There is no practical use in perceiving good courses after the



occasions to which they apply are past, yet to recognise one's self as a fool is the first step towards wisdom ; and this I did very fully, albeit with much chagrin.

Suddenly, and without any warning, my reverie was dispelled by the deep boom of a cannon, and the next minute Captain Perugia entered my cabin, very pale, but quite calm and self-possessed. "We are lost," said he ; "no earthly power can save us ; but we will die like men ;" and with great deliberation he made the sign of the cross upon his forehead, and for a few moments his lips moved as if he were speaking, but he uttered no sound. "Lost !" I echoed, for I was downright amazed ; "how lost ? The ship is sound, the weather fair, and Venice at peace with every State." At this moment three terrific cannon charges rent the air. Captain Perugia shook his head sadly. "The Turk is as deceitful as Satan," said the captain ; 'thou speakest truly, yet stand matters as I have said. To the northward ride thirty-four of his frigates in the figure of a crescent, and presently will they enclose us, if they do not sooner sink us with their guns." "But Venice and the Porte are at peace," I reiterated. "What of that ?" retorted the captain warmly ; "it may be that the Admiral Pasha desires sport, or the Sultan needs Christian slaves, and no Venetian vessel within a hundred leagues of us to tell the tale. I have said it ; the Turk is more deceitful than Satan, and you may prepare either for immediate death or to be chained to an oar in the galley of the infidel. Do as you will ; I and my men elect to die." He turned and again ascended to the deck. Hastily snatching a brace of pistols from a locker, I followed the captain up the companion-way, thinking of the remark of Signor Simona when he presented them to me, that I should certainly not need to use them while aboard the *Orio Malipietro*.

On reaching the deck I saw the formidable Turkish fleet, distant not more than half an English mile, and disposed as Captain Perugia had described. The captain himself I could nowhere see ; but after I had stood for a minute or so, gazing



in silent wonder at the grand spectacle before me, and wondering whether the Turks intended to do us any mischief or not, he approached me from the after-part of the vessel, leading Anita and her maid. Both the women appeared dazed with fright, but they obeyed the captain's orders quieter and with greater expedition than I should have expected of them. The stern of a frigate being large and square, it affords a better mark for an enemy's guns than any other part of the vessel, and in the captain's judgment it was safest for the women to be concealed in my cabin, situated in the fore-part; where they were accordingly placed with all haste, and the door barricaded on the outside with bales of merchandise. These arrangements being speedily made, the captain addressed himself to me and his men as we stood in groups round about him helplessly gazing at the huge hulls of the Turkish vessels as they approached us: "Comrades and fellow-citizens!—the enemy of your State and of all Christendom is about to add to the many proofs of his treachery and cowardice. Behold, Venice and the Turks are at peace; ours is a small vessel, built for trade and not for war. And it seems that the tremendous sea strength of the Great Turk is to be debased to doing the work of a corsair's galley, we being the victims! We have but one brass cannon aboard, and that good for nothing but signalling, while the thirty-four Turks are well armed, and the lightest of them is three times as heavy as we. Escape is impossible; but though we number only eighteen men, we can avoid being taken alive. Let us fight with all our strength, and so die, remembering that life with the Turk is worse than many deaths."

Though second to none in valour, it was but a feeble cheer with which the Venetian sailors greeted this speech. Had they been about to engage in a fair battle, none would have been more enthusiastic than they: but an execution excites no enthusiasm, especially in the victims, and such it seemed was to be the character of the coming encounter.

With swelling sails and flying the Venetian flag the *Orio*



*Malipietro* kept her course. A light breeze was blowing, contrary for the Turks but favourable for us, so that we approached each other but slowly. The Turks had fired only four times, and our vessel had not been touched. Armed with pistols and cutlasses, our little band lay upon the deck close to the side awaiting whatever might be in store for us, and as we so lay I could not dismiss the hope that no harm was intended to us, that our alarm was ill founded; and as minute succeeded minute, and still the Turk did not open fire upon us, I expressed my opinion to the captain, who lay at my side; but he vouchsafed me no reply.

The left horn of the crescent of Turkish ships being now quite close, the intention of the Turks was perceived, for the foremost vessel left her fellows and bore right down upon us, still however without firing. "They hope to take our property and lives undamaged, but remember—death, not captivity." These were the last words I heard this noble captain speak. After a few minutes of almost breathless silence the Turkish frigate fouled the lee side of the *Orio Malipietro* and, with a wild shout of triumph, an overwhelming force of Turkish sailors leaped aboard the frigate. And then ensued a most bloody hand-to-hand fight, of which, at first, the Venetians had much the better. Our enemies were too close upon us to permit of the employment of any weapon but the cutlass, but of that we made very effective use, for being close to the side of the vessel, and our whereabouts unknown to the first party of Turks who boarded us, they leaped as it were upon the points of our blades, and so suffered great loss. But the odds against us were as a thousand to one, and with fatal effect the Turks hastened to avenge the defeat of their fellows. Captain Perugia fell dead at my feet, his heart transfixed by the broad blade of a ferocious Turk whom he had partly disabled; nearly all our little band were dead or dying, and above the din of the fight resounded the shrieks of the women imprisoned below.

I felt faint and sick, and was besides bleeding from a wound in my shoulder, yet miraculously, in some way which I am unable



to describe, I contrived to back out from the fight and flee below to the women, whose condition was truly pitiable. I did so not because of cowardice, for I believe I fought as well as any man, Venetian or Turk, that memorable day; and certainly from the moment the frigate was boarded I had abandoned all hope of escape: but the warning of the noble Perugia, "Death, not captivity," still rang in my ears, and I resolved that my last minute should be spent in an endeavour to save these unhappy creatures from so horrible a fate. I reached my cabin, and with a mighty effort pulled away a few of the bales so as to allow the door to open wide enough for me to enter sideways; but I had to contend with the strength of the women within, who, not knowing but it was the enemy who sought admittance, pulled the door the other way with all their might. As I entered the cabin, and before I could speak to its frantic occupants, the Turks rushed down the companion and began to remove the bales. I stood close by the side of the door, and the first who entered I laid low with a pistol-shot in his head. My triumph however was short, for the next instant a fearful blow from a mace stretched me at full length on the floor; yet was I only partly stunned, being conscious of yelling Turks all around—of Anita and her maid being bound and carried out, and of my own ankles and wrists being bound in such brutal fashion that the blood started from my flesh. And then kind Nature came to my relief and I remembered no more.

*November 19.*—I was never able to ascertain how long I remained unconscious; but this I know full well, that when I came to myself again I was a prisoner aboard a Turkish frigate. The wound in my shoulder had been cleansed and dressed, and my wrists and ankles unbound; but my limbs were hugely swollen by the barbarous usage to which they had been subjected, and the least movement occasioned me acute pain. Two young Turks, hardly more than boys, sat watching me intently, conversing softly in their language, of which I comprehended not one word. I was lying in a rudely furnished cabin, not unlike a dismantled gun-room, and looking around



me I perceived nothing of my own; companions, my girdle containing my money and papers, the Venetian merchant's chests of sequins—everything was gone. The terrible incidents which immediately preceded my present miserable condition, and the horrors probably awaiting me, crowded vividly upon my mind; and, exclaiming vehemently against my ill fate, I fell into a delirium, and so remained for I know not how long.

When again I recovered myself, I was reposing on a pallet on the deck of the same frigate in charge of the same two young Turks, who sat cross-legged on either side and eyed me with an air of grave curiosity. We were close to a port the like of which for magnificence I had never seen. The sea was dotted with small crafts and rowing boats, but not more than two other Turkish frigates were in sight. With a heavy heart I observed that the vessel I was aboard held the *Orio Malipietro* in tow, and that both the masts of the frigatoon were cut away, and her name effaced from her prow roughly as by an adze. My emotions were strangely conflicting. I had lost everything except my life, and doubted not but it would have been better had I fallen like the brave Perugia; but the face of Nature was glorious beyond description—pen or brush, wielded by whatever hand, would equally fail to depict it. On a calm sea under a cloudless sky we drew nearer and nearer to a beautiful city whose gilded minarets and domes shone resplendently in the summer sun. The prospect was so entrancing that as I regarded it I momentarily lost thought of my dreadful plight. Approaching it yet nearer, a dome of enormous size and superb proportions met my gaze, which I thought could be no other than the Mosque of St Sophia in the city of Constantine. And such indeed it was.



## XII.

### ROGER TRUEMAN : HIS RECORD CONCLUDED.

*November 22.*—Though gradually recovering from the effects of the terrible strain to which I had been subjected in the recent fight, and the cruel wounds inflicted by my captors on my ankles and wrists, I was still unable to help myself in any way. The vessel I was aboard being arrived alongside the quay, it was found necessary to carry me ashore, which was accordingly done by the same two young Turks who had tended me since the day of my capture. I was placed on a litter and securely strapped to it ; not, I believe, because of any fear that I should attempt to escape, but to prevent my falling off. These preparations made, there came to me a Turk, older and more handsomely dressed than the young Turks, my attendants, who regarded me with great attention for several minutes. He then stooped to where I lay bound, and, slightly raising my left hand, took a gold signet ring from my third finger, and proceeded to examine it as one would examine anything rare and strange. With an air of great calmness and satisfaction, he placed my ring on the corresponding finger of his own hand, and then gave an order, the purport of which I did not understand ; but one of the young Turks went away and returned almost immediately, carrying a piece of crimson silk. The silk was placed over my face, so that I could see nothing, and the litter upon which I lay was lifted and carried I knew not whither.

It seemed a long time before my face was again uncovered, but I have since thought that it was perhaps not more than ten



or fifteen minutes. When next I saw the light of day, I was in a small square apartment, furnished as simply as the cabin of the Turkish frigate I had just vacated. It had but one window, and that long and narrow; and the wall wherein it was set being of great thickness, it seemed little more than a slit. However, it sufficed to admit the sunshine, which streamed in upon me with so much brilliance that it dispelled the despair engendered by my unhappy situation. The old Turk, still wearing the ring which he had taken from me, was present when my face was uncovered and the straps of my litter unloosed. I addressed him in English, French, and Italian; but he returned no answer, busying himself in issuing orders to my attendants and some other Turks there present—for my benefit, as I afterwards found. A carpet of exquisite workmanship and colour was brought in and laid upon the floor, and afterwards luxurious cushions, covered with rich yellow silk, were placed around by the walls. On some of these latter was I carefully laid, and the litter on which I had arrived was carried away. A bowl of sherbet and a dish of delicious fruits were set down within my reach, my two young attendants took up positions near to me with their legs crossed upon cushions inferior to those on which I lay, the other Turks withdrew, and a moment after sounds reached me as of the door being barred on the outer side.

In this small room, then, was I kept a close prisoner for many days—how many I know not, for I had lost count of time. I was liberally supplied with food and my wounds were carefully tended, so that I made rapid progress towards recovery. My sufferings were now chiefly mental. I wearied my brain in the endeavour to think why I was thus incarcerated, and what was intended to be done with me, but failed to satisfy myself. The uncertain fate of the unhappy Anita increased my anxiety; but I could learn nothing, neither could I act in any way, my attendants being faithful to their trust, and always refusing to heed the interrogative signs which I made to them. When I was able to walk about my prison I experienced some relief



by looking out of the window, an employment to which my guards had no reason to object, for I was confined on the top-most storey of a tall tower. The view from my prison was extremely beautiful. Nestling among the groves of plane and cypress which crown the apex of the triangular figure presented by Constantinople, I could discern what appeared to be another but smaller city, very jealously immured; and from the extraordinary splendour of its marble and gilded kiosques, its pavilions, gardens, and fountains, I was sure it could be no other than the superb palace city called the Seraglio, the home of the Grand Turk himself. Every day I would stand for hours at my window feasting my eyes on the wealth of natural beauty before me. Occasionally there would be a large assemblage of persons within the gardens enclosed by the outer walls of the Seraglio, the gates would be opened, and a procession of grandees, blazing with jewels and brightly coloured silks, come forth, accompanied by the music of strange instruments, the strains of which would sometimes faintly reach my ear; but I was at too great a height to make out the principal figures in the procession, and though I guessed that on such occasions the Sultan was about to ride through the streets of his city, I did not know so positively.

At last all trace of my bodily injuries was gone, and I enjoyed as good health as is possible in a young and vigorous man denied outdoor exercise and oppressed with anxiety. I knew not how long I had been in my prison, but I observed that the days appeared somewhat shorter than when I was first brought there, and that the heat of noon was less oppressive. I was about to assert that these facts led me to re-consider my position, but that would not be accurate, for its consideration was never for a moment absent from my mind; yet could I in no way account for the treatment meted out to me, which must be, I thought, at once useless and expensive to my captors. One morning my brow was feverish from prolonged thinking of these things, and I was more than usually oppressed with a sense of my powerlessness to help myself, when I was startled by



the sound of my door being unbarred. I did not know the hour, but from the appearance of the city below I knew it was too early for the arrival of my guards, and the regularity of their attendance was a prominent feature in the maddening monotony of my life. Soon my curiosity was turned to inexpressible delight as a middle-aged gentleman in European dress entered my room and extended his right hand towards me, saying in excellent English, "Good-morning, sir. Is your name Trueman?"

I could not restrain my joy at hearing my native tongue spoken once more, more especially as the words employed were of a kindly sort, and the question such as caused my heart to beat fast in anticipation of release from my bonds. I stepped forward to seize the proffered hand of the Englishman (for such I conceived he was) with so much eagerness that he retreated a few paces to where my guards were now standing, and involuntarily held up his arm to keep me off. "Softly, my friend," said the stranger; "I intend you no mischief. Be seated, I pray you, and tell me truly and briefly how it is you come to be here;" and to inspire me with confidence he patted me gently on the shoulder and sat himself down on a cushion. Seating myself by his side, and suppressing as well as I was able the great excitement under which I laboured, I narrated the whole of my story just as I have recorded it in this volume. The stranger gave careful attention to my recital, at no point interrupting me with a question or comment, but sitting quietly stroking his long brown beard. When I had finished my story, he still remained silent for a minute or so, and then, looking up at me, said:

"I am Sir Thomas Roe, representative in this country of King James of England. Your passports and your letter of introduction accidentally came into my hands last night; and you may thank God that it was so, for had it fallen out otherwise it is impossible to say what might have become of you. The causes which have produced your recent experiences are quite clear to me. You have not been so unfortunate as in the circumstances might have been expected. But before I explain



further, console yourself with the knowledge that your ten chests of sequins are quite safe, and so is your girdle, your passports, and your English money, and that you are free to take them when and where you choose. Know then that we are in the second week of September, and that less than five months ago Constantinople was the scene of a bloody revolution. The Janissaries, incensed by deferred payments, broke through all restraints of authority on learning that Sultan Othman contemplated a pilgrimage to Mecca, the expense of which they conceived boded ill for the satisfaction of their claims. This turbulent and powerful military body broke down the outer gates of the Seraglio, and with angry demonstrations demanded the heads of the Sultan's ministers who had advised the sacred journey. For the moment the discontent of the Janissaries was appeased with fair words; but the Government was in a bad way; with an incompetent Sultan, dire lack of money, and but feeble support of any sort, it was necessary that some vigorous measures should be adopted. The Ulema met secretly and resolved to depose Sultan Othman, who was soon afterwards decoyed into one of the seven towers which compose this building, where he was strangled by an ex-Vizier assisted by three pashas. This step, while it effectually disposed of the pilgrimage question, raised other questions vastly more momentous to the State. Mustapha, who was Othman's predecessor and had himself been deposed, is again installed Sultan, though he cannot, I think, hold his high office for long, his conduct being that of a lunatic. The treasury being almost empty, and money urgently needed, the Admiral Pasha was instructed to make reprisals on Venetian vessels for indignities inflicted on the faithful by Venetian traders at Rhodes and Cyprus. There have been no complaints to the Porte of any such indignities—for the reason, as I suppose, that no such indignities have been committed; but the Admiral Pasha understood his orders in the spirit in which they were issued, and hence the capture of the Venetian frigate in which you came hither. It was seen that you were not of the



Italian race, and you and your effects were set aside for special consideration—a consideration delayed by the turbulence of the times, which engrosses the attention of all the officers of State. It was last night when the Grand Vizier put your English papers into my hands for interpretation. I perceived within a little what had occurred, and exercised such power as I have for your benefit. Your property, uninjured and complete, is at my house, and there it is that I would advise you to come and stay for the present. With regard to the captain who has your ring, I could by my word cause his head to be brought to you at once on a dish, but you have not been in Turkey long enough to be indifferent to the sight; and indeed his fault scarce merits the penalty.”

No words can adequately express the transports of joy with which I drank in the generous declaration of Sir Thomas Roe. When I was a schoolboy at St Edmund's Bury, I saw a thief standing on a gallows, his arms bound and his neck in a noose, with the hangman by his side ready to turn him off; but the king's pardon at that moment arriving, the halter was removed from his neck, his arms unbound, and he was led back to prison. Nothing can efface from my memory the expression of that man's face while the king's pardon was being read out to him, and I think I must have felt somewhat as the Suffolk robber felt on that occasion. My thanks, however briefly expressed, were very fervent, and I felt faint with pleasurable excitement when Sir Thomas rose to leave and bade me accompany him. The two young Turks who had guarded me threw wide the door to allow of our departure, and bowed to my protector so humbly that their foreheads touched the carpet. I would have rewarded them for the kindly treatment I had received at their hands; but I had nothing wherewith to do so, and the opportunity passed.

After descending a great number of steps, and threading our way through some paved courts not much unlike the court-yards of an English castle, my protector and I at last reached a public street, where awaited us six negroes with two fine



horses. Sir Thomas and I having mounted the horses, they were led by two negroes, with a negro walking on either side of each rider. And in this manner we proceeded to Pera, where Sir Thomas Roe's house was situate. Our progress through narrow streets filled with a motley crowd of petty chapmen strangely appareled, all pressing closely to get a view of me, was very slow ; but I would not if I could have hastened it, for the sense of liberty, the curious scene, and the conversation of Sir Thomas Roe were delightful to me.

Of Anita and her maid Sir Thomas could unfortunately tell me nothing. The usual course, he said, with female captives was to submit them to the Mistress of the Harem for examination ; and if, in the judgment of that lady, they were sufficiently young and beautiful for the Sultan's use, they were received into his majesty's harem, while such as failed to present the necessary youthfulness and beauty were sent to the slave market and sold. He promised to institute an inquiry concerning them that same day, but warned me that he was unable to afford them any protection in whatever circumstances they might be placed, as they were neither of them English subjects.

The house of Sir Thomas Roe was large, square, and low, with wide verandahs on every side. It was in the middle of a garden on the side of a hill, and overlooked the sea. The demesne was surrounded by a thick wall so high that the house could scarce be seen from the outside. We were no sooner entered within the gates than a swarm of slaves crowded about us, and our jaded horses were half led, half pulled, towards the house. I was about to dismount, when a stalwart negro threw himself upon the ground right in my way, his legs and arms doubled under him in curious fashion, and the surface of his back presented upward. Hesitating for a moment, in doubt what this might mean, I noticed another slave behave in a similar manner in front of my companion, who proceeded at once to dismount, using his slave as we in England use a stepping-stone. I copied his example, but with an ill grace,



for Sir Thomas smilingly observed, "I perceive by many signs that you are newly arrived in Turkey."

As soon as we had refreshed ourselves with sherbet and fruits, Sir Thomas Roe himself conducted me to a room, where I saw, standing one upon other on the floor, the ten black chests, each bearing my name, apparently in the same state as when I last saw them in my cabin aboard the *Orio Malipietro*, and there also was my girdle full of money, my papers, and the pistols which Signor Simona had given me.

"Mr Trueman," said my host, "if the contents of your chests had been known to your captors, I fear nothing I could have done would have saved them from confiscation. As it was, my knowledge of you was acquired barely in time to help you, for the public disturbances having now subsided, your effects would soon have been examined, with what result you may guess. On learning that your usage was the best which the Porte allows to any prisoner, I thought it prudent to make your property my first care, and accordingly obtained last night an order from the Grand Vizier that it should be placed in my charge, and behold it before you as I received it. Examine it all carefully at your leisure, for I must now to the Seraglio, where I will inquire concerning the two Venetian ladies, your fellow-voyagers, and of the Venetian merchant whose sequins you say these are. Meanwhile you must consider my house and servants as your own." At these words my noble benefactor left me, and I proceeded to carefully scrutinise each chest. None of them had been tampered with in any way; they were all of the proper weight, and the resinous black paint with which each was covered had scarce received a scratch. My money, too, was equally safe and correct, nine hundred and forty-four pounds all told, showing that my expenditure since I left England had amounted to no more than fifty-six pounds.

After an absence of several hours Sir Thomas Roe returned, and I perceived at once from his countenance that he bore no good news. "The two Venetian ladies," said he, "you are



not likely to see again. I have spoken with the Chief Eunuch, who has conferred with the Mistress of the Harem, and I learn that both ladies were rejected as unworthy of the Sultan, and sent to the slave market for sale. I have been to the slave market, and talked with the merchants there, and am told by them that the younger of the two ladies was bought by an old merchant from Aleppo for two hundred sequins, but that she protested in dumb show so pathetically against being parted from her mistress, the only human being near with whom she was able to speak, that her new owner bought the other lady also, for seventy-five sequins, to be the servant of his first purchase; and thus, both as slaves, and with their respective positions reversed, they have been carried away to Aleppo."

Poor Anita! I was too dazed by contemplation of her miserable and degraded fate to offer any remark. Sir Thomas Roe continued:

"Signor Mario Battista is dead; he was killed a full month before you came to Constantinople. He had amassed a large fortune by trade, and being a shrewd, clever man he liberally fee'd an influential pasha, from whom he received in return intelligence of State matters. In this way the unfortunate Battista learned in advance of the Porte's alleged grievance against the Venetians, and correctly estimating the incident, he closed his affairs here with as much secrecy and despatch as he could, and, accompanied by his wife and his two sons, embarked one night aboard a vessel he had purchased, taking with him an immense treasure of money and jewels. But his flight was noticed almost at once, and his means of information ascertained. His friend the pasha was bowstrung, Battista's ship overtaken and sunk with all aboard before it had got out of the Bosphorus, and the treasure brought back and placed in the Imperial treasury, where it now is."

This horrible narrative dumbfounded me, and I resolved to get without the dominions of the Grand Turk as soon as conveniently might be. Apprehending that I should experi-





"THERE, CONNIE, I HAVE BROUGHT YOU HOME THE HUSBAND I PROMISED YOU."—See Page 43.







ence some difficulty in reaching Venice (for I designed to return to that city), I questioned Sir Thomas Roe as to the degree of safety enjoyed by Englishmen in Turkey; and in particular desired him to tell me how it came about that his representations were more regarded than the representations made by ambassadors from other countries, which appeared very plainly the case.

"The Turks," said Sir Thomas Roe, "have respected England since 1588. In 1587 England humiliated herself by asking these people to aid her in repelling invasion. The Turk, who is nothing if not selfish, of course refused, and Elizabeth's envoys succeeded only in impressing the Porte with an idea of England's impotency. But when in 1588 England single-handed scattered and destroyed the whole might of Spain, it was noted here, as indeed it was throughout the world, that the islanders of northern Europe are not only keen in trade, but quick to avenge and formidable in fight, accustomed withal to speak the truth and stand for their rights against whatever odds. Your Turk, I say, noted these things, and the benefit to Englishmen has been that to this day their ships ride in the Bosphorus as securely as in their own narrow seas. That it is not so with the ships of weaker States you yourself can witness."

For many days I continued to reside in the house of Sir Thomas Roe, not going abroad further than the boundaries of the gardens which encompassed it. My host was a delightful companion, as full of information as an egg is of meat, yet withal singularly modest in his manner of imparting it. By his advice I not only delayed my departure for Venice, but refrained from walking about the city, and I was the more content to follow his counsel when I considered the pain which intelligence of the ill-fated *Orio Malipietro* and her passengers would inflict on Signor Simona; and so I rested myself, filling my mind from the rich stores of knowledge possessed by my host, and making under his able guidance rapid progress towards a mastery of the Turkish tongue.



But the time soon came when I could no longer suppress my desire to explore the streets of Constantinople, and observe the manners and customs of the people, and I intimated as much to my host in the choicest Turkish I could command. My host no further opposed my desire, but merely advised me to adopt the dress of a Turk, and never to stir abroad unless accompanied by at least two stout slaves; suggestions which I very willingly adopted, though at first I found the loose flowing garments of the Ottomans excessively inconvenient, and could not then have believed that I should for twenty-eight years clothe myself in no other way.

The health of Sir Thomas Roe was not robust, and it was always his custom after a spell of sickness to talk of his return to England, a change which he contemplated with pleasure. He had no regular assistance in the duties of his office, which at times pressed heavily upon him, so that when I volunteered to assist in the preparation of his despatches to King James my offer was gratefully accepted. And thus the winter of 1622 passed away, the spring of 1623 advanced, and still my daily life remained unaltered; but I had meanwhile acquired the language of the Turks, and that too with little trouble, for it presents but few difficulties to an earnest student. In June 1623 intelligence reached Sir Thomas Roe, in answer to inquiries which he had instituted at my instigation, that Signor Pietro Simona was dead, that the good old Venetian merchant had died in the belief that all who sailed from Venice in the *Orio Malipietro* had perished. There remained nothing now to attract me to that city, and abandoning my intention to revisit it, I continued to live with Sir Thomas Roe.

The stirring events which occurred just previous to my entry into Constantinople were eclipsed by the momentous changes in the Turkish Government which took place in the summer and autumn of 1623. Sultan Mustapha having by the absurdity of his acts convinced everybody of his insanity, he was again deposed, and a young boy, scarce twelve years old, set in his place as Amurath IV. I saw the youthful Amurath for the



first time on the day his high dignity was conferred upon him, and thought he was an exceptionally handsome boy. Certainly I perceived nothing in his clear-cut features, his aquiline nose, his full, lustrous, dark eyes, which denoted in any degree the fierce, bloody, and remorseless tyrant he afterwards became. Being too young to rule though not to reign, all power reposed in Mahpeiker, mother of the Sultan. Mahpeiker was a clever woman, sincerely desirous, I believe, of the happiness of her son, and of the stability and prosperity of the State; and to secure those objects she scrupled not to seek the advice of Sir Thomas Roe—conduct which gave mortal offence to the Grand Vizier and other high officers of state, and tended not to the security of the Englishman thus honoured. The difficulties with which the Sultana-mother had to contend were numerous and great, for the lunatic Mustapha and a host of parasitical pashas who surrounded him had depleted the treasury, and suffered the defences of the country to fall into decay.

Sir Thomas Roe having recommended me for various public employments, his recommendations were adopted. I undertook the tasks, and acquitted myself with so much satisfaction to the Court that other commissions were given to me without any suggestion by my friend, my success being due not to any exceptional ability in me, but simply to honesty—a quality rarely found in a Turkish official, nor expected in more than a minor degree.

Early in 1625, the health of Sir Thomas Roe was such that it determined him to return home, and arrangements were made for Sir Thomas Philips to represent England at the Porte. In three years I had grown accustomed to life in Turkey, which was not at all distasteful to me. During the minority of Amurath IV., my services were frequently requisitioned by Mahpeiker and her advisers in drafting despatches to foreign nations, my services being rewarded with magnificent presents. I visited the Seraglio when I would, and on two occasions was examined by the assembled Ulema as to the



respective military strength of the nations of Europe. The ten chests of Venetian sequins remained unbroached, and my English money was not decreased by one penny. I had purchased numerous slaves of both sexes, and indulged myself as unrestrainedly as any pasha in the empire; yet notwithstanding all my expense I waxed richer and richer, and my personal influence increased daily. Such being my condition in 1625, it will be small wonder that I was disinclined to return to England with Sir Thomas Roe, more especially as at that very time the Grand Vizier, in the name of Mahpeiker and the Ulema, offered me the distinguished position of Governor of the Vilayet of Trebizond—which, as all men know, is an important province and port on the Black Sea coast—stipulating only that I should embrace the Mussulman faith. I was but twenty-five years old, and the prospect of being king in everything but name of a large and beautiful province was too flattering to resist, and I accepted the position with its accompanying condition, much to the disgust of Sir Thomas Roe, whose friendship for me declined from that hour. A few days later my noble friend sailed for England, and the last words I heard him speak informed me that he had hoped for better things of me than had appeared. At this distance of time it is easy to perceive in whom lay the fault which wrought this estrangement; and this incident is one of many which make a retrospect of my life very melancholy for me.

In delivering to me the warrant for my office, the Grand Vizier, a crafty old Turk with a long white beard and a magnificent but deceptive eye, complimented me on my honesty and truthfulness, to which qualities, he said, I owed my appointment, inasmuch as the Sultana-Mother had been very favourably impressed therewith, though, for his part, he thought these were virtues which might be carried too far. Honesty, he further observed, was in itself a commendable thing, and sometimes worked well (as in my own case, where it had gained for me this valuable appointment), yet it might not be lost sight of that the tribute from Trebizond must at least



be maintained if not increased, and that the goodwill of himself and some of his brother officers was only to be retained by gifts. With regard to truth he could not speak so favourably—that it was frequently inexpedient to employ it was the daily experience of all men, but carefulness on occasions when its use was dispensed with was doubtless needful. “Lie with sufficient circumstance to ensure belief,” said this consummate deceiver, “yet with not so much circumstance that the forgettal thereof shall embarrass thee on another occasion. In this lies the whole art of lying.” Thus admonished, and with an overpowering sense of my newly acquired dignity, I set out for Trebizond accompanied by a numerous retinue.

The city and province over which I was appointed to rule had been deplorably ill governed from time immemorial. The people had been harried and plundered by an unbroken succession of incompetent despots, and no man’s life or property was secure. Before I set foot in Trebizond, I had resolved to use the unlimited power entrusted to me in reforming any abuses which I might find prevailing there. Having taken up my abode in an ancient castle which faced the sea and stood just without the city walls, I addressed the chief men of the city who had gathered to receive me, and occasioned them much consternation by announcing my intention of living as simply and frugally as possible, of administering impartial justice between man and man irrespective of rank, office, or wealth, and of my willingness to hear personally all cases in which suitors for justice could show reasonable cause for appeal against the judgment of the cadis. “The authority,” I said, “delegated to me by the Commander of the Faithful, to inflict death on any inhabitant of this province who shall incur my displeasure, I will never exercise except to punish the evil doer whose deeds in the judgment of all men shall merit that penalty. The annual tribute of Trebizond fixed by the Sultan’s advisers is a heavy one—heavier, I fear, than you can pay without hardship. Nevertheless, it must be paid, punctually and fully; but I hope by the laws I will enact and the



impartiality of my rule soon to lighten your burdens, to which end I will direct all the energy of my nature, confident of success if only your present protestations of loyalty be sincere."

The domestic establishment of my predecessor (who—marvellous in a Turkish pasha!—had died a natural death) was large, expensive, and mostly useless; so I deemed it a fitting subject for a first experiment with my reforming hand. I reduced it by four-fifths, and reconstructed the remainder on a system which I had devised myself—abolished the office of purse-bearer, personally controlled the treasury, and kept a sleepless eye on accounts rendered to me by my subordinates. Verily the ways of reformers are hard, and the opposition of those whom it is sought to benefit is too great to measure. At first my rule was as unpopular with the people as that of any of my predecessors had been, which is saying much; but I lived it down, and in a few years converted hatred into tolerance, which yet later was changed to esteem when it was seen and felt that I scrupulously adhered to my original declaration. Trebizond prospered enormously under my rule, and in ten years had become one of the wealthiest and most peaceful vilayets in the empire, whereas before it had been one of the poorest and most turbulent. Mahpeiker's Grand Vizier, who, true to the traditions of his race and office, had fixed the tribute of Trebizond at ten times as much as had ever before been wrung from that province, was astounded to receive from me the sum he had demanded, and was at a stand to know how I had accomplished so wonderful a feat. In his dilemma the Vizier resorted to the Court Astrologer from whom, after narrating the circumstances, he asked for enlightenment. After practising divers fooleries with an astrolabe the astrologer informed the Vizier that the Beardless Pasha of Trebizond had discovered a gold mine, an announcement which so powerfully excited the cupidity of the Vizier that he undertook a journey to Trebizond to ascertain whether it was really so or not. With great difficulty I proved to this vile wretch that his credulity had been abused—that my success was due merely o



my acting directly contrary to his advice ; and he returned to Constantinople, disappointed and disconcerted. But during his absence from the capital a faction had been formed against him, his peculations had been exposed, and in a passage leading to the Seraglio he was met by the Seven Mutes and there unceremoniously strangled.

Years came and passed away, and many were the changes in the government of Turkey. In 1632 Amurath, at that time a youth of twenty, assumed full power and ruled his empire with a rigorous despotism which has never been exceeded in the history of the world. Fortunately for his people, Amurath was a man of great capacity. Though himself inconceivably cruel, he was politic enough not to permit overmuch tyranny in others. His Majesty professed great regard for me, and did me the honour and his people the benefit to enact for his whole empire some salutary laws which I had enforced with advantage at Trebizond. My position was assured by the mandate of the Sultan and the loyalty of the people, my status that of a dependent prince, my wealth greater than that of any other pasha in the empire, and my harem unsurpassed by that of the Sultan, being peopled by the beauties of my province, fair-haired girls from Circassia and Georgia, and an Anatolian maid of surpassing loveliness whom the Sultana Mahpeiker had given to me.

And thus circumstanced did I live on. In 1640 the Sultan died of a fever, accelerated by terror at an eclipse of the sun, and was succeeded by his brother Ibrahim,

A man

Snail slow in action, dull of apprehension,  
Rich in delay and doubt, confusing all things,

whose milder temper, though appreciated by the people with whom he was in immediate touch, soon effaced the good effects of Amurath's iron discipline. Ibrahim reigned but eight years, and the power and wealth of Turkey dwindled so marvellously under his rule that to save the empire from disintegration the Mufti agreed upon an edict to extinguish this feeble-minded voluptuary ; and he was accordingly bowstrung, and his son,



the present Sultan Mahomet IV., then a child of seven, set in his place.

The regicide of 1648 failed entirely of its object, and the people of Turkey were plunged into yet greater misery by the deadly rivalry for supreme influence which ensued between the Sultanas Mahpeiker and Tarkhan, grandmother and mother of the infant Sultan Mahomet. The feud was maintained with the utmost bitterness, and each of the principals attracted to herself a faction of pashas. The Turkish treasury, always the prey of Court officials, was soon emptied by the host of thieves who saw in this division an opportunity to enrich themselves; and poverty and disaffection prevailed in the land. Demands for money from my province became larger and more frequent, until at last they could no longer be met. In a vigorous remonstrance to Sultana Mahpeiker and her advisers, I reviewed my conduct during the whole term of my pashalic, insisting upon the impossibility of increasing the tribute from Trebizond, and requesting permission to resign my office. My report did not reach Constantinople until a few days after the death of Mahpeiker, who had been assassinated by a partisan of Tarkhan. About the time this intelligence was brought to me, my son by my beautiful Anatolian—a charming boy of fifteen, the delight and hope of my life—succumbed to malaria, and I determined to return to England.

The corrupt cabal then ruling at Constantinople would, I was sure, oppose my departure from Trebizond, for a like reason and probably by similar means that Signor Battista's departure from Constantinople was opposed in 1622. Of this I had no doubt, and I ordered my conduct accordingly, escaping in a Muscovite merchant ship to Taganrog, whence I travelled slowly, and with no incident worth the telling, to London, arriving in the latter city on Christmas eve in the year 1651, bringing with me a goodly store of Turkish money and jewels, and the ten chests of sequins just as they were packed by Signor Simona twenty-nine years before, and as they remain even to this day.



*December 3.*—I am disposed to think there are very few men who can look back upon a long life with unmixed satisfaction, but I hope the larger number of men are more happily circumstanced in this respect than the old man who pens this record. There remains but little for me to tell, and I am weary of writing about myself. At Holdenhurst I found my brother Mathew alive and happy in the companionship of his wife and sons and daughters, as, thank God, he is to-day. And now twenty years have passed since I returned to England, all of which (except a brief and fruitless visit which I made to Venice in 1660 to discover the heirs of Signor Pietro Simona) have been passed in this quiet English village where I was born. The alchemical investigations with which I have occupied my leisure have failed to yield the results I had hoped for, and my only wish now is that my life (which by many signs I know is now surely tending to its close) may be prolonged sufficiently to allow me to found a hospital for the poor of St Edmund's Bury with the Venetian sequins which for safety have lain so many years immured in the Abbot's Cell beneath this house. Is it too much to pray for, that my Maker shall regard the charitable act I contemplate as some slight atonement for my bitterly repented renunciation of the faith of my fathers and of the riotous excesses of my youth and middle age? Truly do I now well perceive that Lust is a flame which rages fiercely and expires, while Love endures for ever and is clothed with immortal youth.

ROGER TRUEMAN.



### XIII.

#### UNREST.

When Hope and Expectation keen arise,  
Then Folly reigns and sober Wisdom dies.

THE conflicting emotions aroused by the perusal of my ancestor's Record, but more particularly, I think, by the keen hope of the existence of the treasure where it had been stored by Roger Trueman, and the possibilities which its recovery and possession presented to my mind, were beyond the strength of my nature to endure. The heavy volume fell from my hands to the floor, and I involuntarily rested against the side of the carriage, while a feeling of deadly faintness came over me, though I did not lose consciousness. Without doubt my aspect presented all the signs of sudden illness, or the comedy which immediately ensued could not be accounted for.

"Janet," screamed the old lady, "the flask, the flask! Don't you see the gentleman has fainted? Quick! What a stupid girl you are!" and the next moment that awful gorgon had me fixed in a corner, where she frantically endeavoured to thrust the neck of her nauseous flask into my mouth. I offered what resistance I could, but my efforts were as nothing opposed to the strength of my tormentor, who persisted in her purpose, her tongue running with great volubility while she saturated my shirt front with brandy. "This is what comes of reading novels. God bless us all, look at the size of that one! How thankful I am that I never allowed my sainted William to see any such devices of Satan! Janet, throw that horrid book out of the window."



The natural hesitation of the young lady addressed to deal in such summary fashion with another person's property averted the threatened calamity, and afforded me an opportunity to grasp my volume, fear of its loss having inspired me with strength for the effort.

"Well, well, keep it, if you must," the old lady continued; "but it would have been no great loss any way; you could have got another at the next station. All novels are alike; though, I must say, that is an extra large one. Ah, if my poor dear boy were alive, he would be just about your age, and, oh, how like you he was! Everybody said what a sweet face my William had—just like a girl's. He was a *good* boy." Here the old lady, being overcome with emotion, resumed her seat, by which circumstance I was enabled to breathe once more, having learned that it is neither pleasant nor judicious when in a fainting condition to be projected against a fat individual enveloped in a vast quantity of crape. The collapse of my fellow-passenger was the signal for my recovery.

It was with much satisfaction that I perceived we had nearly arrived at Cambridge, where I was to change trains. It had transpired in some remarks to her maid that my troublesome fellow-passenger was also going to Bury St Edmund's; but I resolved to avoid her companionship for the second part of my journey by taking a seat in a smoking compartment; and with my precious volume safely stowed in my bag, on the handle of which I kept my hand, I sat looking out of the window ready to alight the moment we entered the station.

The old lady must have divined my intention to flee from her at the earliest possible moment, for, though she did not cease to talk, she now assumed a somewhat quieter manner, confining her remarks to what she was pleased to consider my wonderful resemblance to her dear boy in heaven, and inviting me to visit her at my earliest convenience that she might have the pleasure of gazing on my features, to which end she presented me with her card—



MRS ANDREW BUTTERWELL,  
KINGSTHORPE GRANGE,  
CHEVINGTON,  
BURY ST EDMUND'S.

I took the card, and, having glanced at it, put it in my pocket-book, at the same time resolving to most carefully avoid Chevington and its neighbourhood.

The short journey from Cambridge to Bury passed without incident. I tried hard to dispassionately consider the facts which my ancestor's Record had so opportunely revealed—to digest them and to weigh the chances for and against the treasure having been long ago found and appropriated; but my mental balance was too greatly disturbed for the task, and besides, thoughts of the living treasure which I might fearlessly claim were I but possessed of those long immured Venetian sequins obtruded themselves and prevented me resolving upon any definite plan of action. At last, after what seemed an interminable period, the train steamed into Bury station, and, pale, nervous, and agitated, carrying my bag (which I would not trust to a porter), I ran down the steps into the courtyard. My father was waiting for me with the dogcart, and I observed with satisfaction that he was unaccompanied by a servant.

My father greeted me with great cordiality, and in less time than it takes to tell I was seated at his side and we were speeding towards Holdenhurst as fast as our bay mare could trot. "I thought it was best that you should come home," said he, "if only for a day. Of course, the place would be safe enough with old John; but you know I never fancied leaving it unless you were at home, and just now there are a dozen or more strangers about the Hall. It is a strange piece of business, this affair of your aunt Annie. I have telegraphed to your grandfather that I will do all I can to find out where his daughter is, though, so far as I can perceive at present, that will



be very little. Annie is the last girl in the world I should have expected to err in that way ; she was always such a loving child. I would no more have believed that she had a thought hidden from her father than I would at this moment believe such a thing of you."

At this remark I winced, yet foolishly held my peace as to what I had so lately read, and which now engrossed all my thoughts. To be wise after the event is the quality of modern prophets—of dispensers of generalities and copy-book wisdom, whom I have no desire to imitate. I know not how it was. I suppose I am by nature secretive, or that at the time some ill-defined idea suggested itself to my mind that I should best serve my interest by carefully reserving to myself the information I had acquired ; though I have never at any time regarded my father's interest as other than identical with my own, nor did I conceal my information as part of a determined policy. That my reticence was a grave error I now know. Had I at once imparted my discovery to he who by nature and statute law had the greatest right to know of it, I had spared myself much misery and the British public had not been afflicted with these memoirs.

"Even if you cannot suggest anything for us to do in the matter," said my father, continuing, "it is well that you have returned home. When two persons discuss a case some practicable notion will often occur to one of them which solitary contemplation fails to produce. You have read your grandfather's letter ?"

"Yes ; I have read grandfather's letter," I replied.

"Well, and what is your opinion ?"

"I think he has acted unwisely in making such long journeys to find his daughter, more especially with such slender means as his. If he did not know at all what had become of her, I could better understand his doing so ; but according to Annie's own letters, as her father describes them, she has gone off of her own free will, and repents her act only so far as her present position prevents her seeing her father. Suppose Annie's



address is discovered, and grandfather visits her and learns all her circumstances, depend upon it his gratification will end there; having been heartless enough to voluntarily abandon her father, she would hardly be likely to give up whoever she is with and return to Holdenhurst, or to some employment in London. That you may gather from her protest that she is kindly treated. I do not think so well of her as you and grandfather do."

"Why, Ernest, my boy, you begin to reason like your uncle, and are rather uncharitable; but I fear you are right."

"I am not in the least uncharitable," I retorted warmly. "On the contrary, I regret what has happened as much perhaps as you do; but my sympathy is more with grandfather than with Annie. Although I see but little use in the inquiry he has asked you to make, I was in the act of starting for Richmond to investigate the clue he gave when the Rev. Evan Price brought me your message, and I at once came here instead. Don't think I'm indifferent to what concerns you so much."

"My dear boy, why assure me of what I know so well?" asked this best of fathers. "Your prompt return is sufficient proof of that." As this parental commendation was uttered we passed through my father's gates, and the next minute alighted at the porch of Holdenhurst Hall, where old John stood at the open door to receive us.

I had been absent from my birthplace only one week, but the changes which had been made in it during that brief period astonished me. The entire Hall was encompassed with an intricate network of scaffolding, and our beautiful lawn disfigured by planks, ladders, and piles of slate and white hewn stone laid about in confusion. Many of the upper windows had been taken out, the vacant spaces presenting a grim, inhospitable aspect. Thoughts of the enhanced grandeur of the place a few months hence failed to dispel the chilling depression that came over me as I noticed these changes, and I entered my old home with stranger and sadder feelings than I had ever before experienced.



My discomfort was increased when I saw the interior. All the pictures and armour had been removed from the hall and staircase, and while part of the oak walls remained darkened by the centuries part had been scraped and polished and looked like the library walls of a Kensington mansion built yesterday. In nearly all the rooms the furniture was displaced and much of it covered up.

"How do you like the look of the place?" asked my father with a faint smile.

The disconsolate expression of my face which prompted this query was a sufficient answer to it. I do not remember having ever before been so profoundly miserable as when we wandered together from room to room and along the gloomy corridors surveying the confusion which everywhere prevailed.

"Come, don't be so melancholy about it," urged my father; "in seven or eight weeks at most the Hall will be thoroughly restored and cleaned, and the architect your uncle has engaged assures me that the renovation shall be effected in the most conservative manner possible, the antiquity of the place being in no way damaged."

I observed that I hoped it might be so.

"There is no doubt of it," continued my father. "Have you seen the church? No! It is at present without a roof, and the pulpit has been moved from the north to the south side. Where the altar was the new organ is to be. On Sunday Mr Fuller is to preach in Johnson's barn near the watermill."

"Haven't these changes been made very quickly?"

"Indeed, they have; but you are not acquainted with half of them yet. Yesterday a celebrated arboriculturist from Kew was here and went over the estate, marking trees which he considers too old either for use or ornament; they are to come down, and more than two thousand new trees are to be planted. I am told that your uncle had to pay a fee of £25 for his services."

"Shall we dine now?" I asked, abruptly changing the



subject, though I never felt less inclined to eat in my life. What I had seen and heard made me feel sick at heart, and I would have welcomed almost anything to divert my mind, perplexed as it was and wearied with strong and varying emotions.

"Of course ; you have had a long journey," said my father, looking at his watch. "It is not yet seven o'clock, but I will order something to be served at once."

A small room which overlooked the garden had not as yet been interfered with, and there we sat down to a hastily improvised dinner. Old John waited at table as usual, but made one or two awkward blunders, and seemed so strange in his manner that I took the first opportunity that presented itself of remarking upon it.

"You see, he is over sixty," urged his employer, "and we must not expect much from him now. The alterations going on here, and the presence of so many strangers, has so disorganised him that he has been almost beside himself the last few days ; on Friday I could scarce make anything of him. When the workmen are gone we must find the old man a cottage and a small pension. He has lived here since he was a boy, and has been a good and faithful servant."

"That will be rather lonely for him, won't it? Fancy old John Adams, bachelor and ex-butler, who never had a thought that went beyond his sideboard or the kitchen, living by himself in a cottage !"

"It will be as lonely for him as it has been for me the week that my boy was in London," agreed my good-natured father, and then reverted to the case of my unfortunate aunt Annie. I listened to his opinions and conjectures with but feeble interest, making pretence of so much attention as decency required, while I debated with myself how I might best go down into the crypt unobserved by my father or the servants.

Very rarely was anybody out of bed in Holdenhurst Hall at so late an hour as eleven in the evening ; and I therefore determined, if only I could screw my courage up to the



necessary pitch, to make a secret visit to the crypt at midnight. With this purpose in view I withdrew to my room as soon as possible, and having unpacked my bag wrote to Miss Marsh; but I was so unsettled and unnerved that I made three rough drafts of a short letter before I could express myself to my satisfaction. That task accomplished, I went into the garden, and thence wandered to the stables to fetch a lantern which hung behind one of the doors there—a ponderous structure of glass and metal, encasing an oil lamp, the whole depending on a huge ring; such a lantern as the watchmen of London carried in the time of the Georges. Having assured myself that it was provided with oil and a wick, I conveyed it to my room, and then returned to my father, who at once resumed the discussion of which I was so heartily weary. As with most matters which are much discussed, no decision was reached; and when at ten o'clock we separated for the night, I retired to my room in a strange condition of unrest, a prey to diversified emotions, Hope and Fear struggling for the mastery.



#### XIV.

##### THE CRYPT.

O beauteous Hope, man's solace everywhere,  
Yield not thy sway o'er me to grim Despair.

THE human mind, though busiest when exchanging ideas in conversation with others, dives deepest in solitude. Probably no case was ever profoundly considered unless the student was alone, and never so profoundly as when involuntarily—when the mental faculties are so absorbed in contemplation of one subject that diversion from it is as being awakened from sleep.

I experienced this truth when—having retired to my room, set down the lantern, and exchanged my boots for slippers—I placed my elbows on the mantelpiece and my head upon my hands, and stood so for I know not how long. That such was my attitude for not less than two hours I am sure from the interruption which dispelled my reverie.

I had emptied my pockets, and all the money I possessed—six sovereigns and some odd shillings—lay before me on the mantelpiece. Perhaps it was the sight of these few coins which led me to review my experiences of the past twelve days, and to seriously ask myself for the last time before seeking assurance by actual essay, what were my chances to find the treasure which had been deposited in the crypt beneath my father's house. That the treasure of which I had that day read had been disposed of as described by my ancestor, I did not for a moment doubt; that such a treasure



should be suffered to rest undisturbed for more than two hundred years, there were many reasons to doubt. Yet was it not distinctly asserted by Roger Trueman that the treasure was in the Abbot's Cell in the crypt—that it was to remain there until he built a hospital? Might not the bricked-up arch which my aunt Gertrude had noticed when she went over Holdenhurst Hall be this same Abbot's Cell alluded to by my ancestor; and might not the reason for its being bricked up be to secure its contents? And if that were so, could its contents be other than the quarter of a million Venetian sequins which had so strangely fallen into my ancestor's possession and been as strangely bestowed by him? It must be so. No one of my family had ever built or endowed a hospital—no one of them had ever possessed so much money as a quarter of a million sequins, unless it were this same Roger Trueman; and had so large a sum of money been found in our house and appropriated by any member of my family at any period I could not have failed to hear of it. Yes; the money must certainly be there, and I would presently go below and look at it, and my father and I would fetch it upstairs in the morning. Then would my father and I insist on returning to uncle Sam the money which he had so generously given to us; then would I ask Constance Marsh to become my wife; then——

Great God, what a thing is money—the epitome of all men's desires! Why, those six small yellow counters lying on the shelf before me would buy the hard daily labour of an East Anglian giant, who to gain them would sweat and toil in the parched fields from sunrise to sunset for twelve weeks—wages current this last quarter of the nineteenth century. For less than two of them will not a man labour in darkness in the bowels of the earth with constant peril to life or limb, or stand before a roaring furnace, or work in the noxious air of a factory amid the maddening whirl of machinery, for a week, esteeming himself fortunate if such slender means of life so earned be not denied him? For want of these same counters



has not a loving husband and father watched his wife pine and his child die? Answer, you who have been up and down this England of ours, you who have traversed her towns and villages, you who know how the poor live and how they die, is it not so? Why, in the towns of Christian England, is every man plucked by the sleeve who passes along the byeway? What is the cause? Lust? Nay; dire need of a pitifully few silver counters, and the inability of hundreds of thousands of women to gain them by means more honourable. Even I, whose life has not yet run to two decades, and who have always lived remote from the busy haunts of men, cannot but know these truths; and is it not wrong in one who has youth, leisure, and the luxuries of life to so passionately desire to grasp this treasure, which he has done nothing to acquire and which certainly is not his? But a few days ago, and the spirit of greed was foreign to my nature; now is my whole being dominated by it. Alas, can it be that Love, purest of passions, evokes Avarice? No; desire of that which is necessary in compassing a natural and laudable ambition is not avarice. These sequins are necessary to me if I am to win the girl upon whom I have set my heart; nay, more, perhaps they have been reserved in this mysterious way for this special object. Have not the wise men of the earth in every age ascribed what are commonly called mysteries to the orderly decrees of higher powers? But for my love of Constance Marsh the question whether there exists a hidden treasure in our house or not would only languidly interest me. *Che sara sara.* Now will I light my lantern and go below. If——Heavens! what was that?

I turned about in a fright as great as that of a thief disturbed in his nefarious work, yet it was nothing more than a gentle tapping on the outside of my door. It was now a quarter of an hour past midnight, and my father and the servants should have been in bed at least two hours. As I glanced at my watch the tapping was repeated, as gently as before. I am ashamed to confess how much this simple circumstance



alarmed me. I listened intently for a minute, conscious of nothing but the loud ticking of my watch and the violent throbbing of my heart, when the tapping was repeated a third time, still very softly. With a great effort I disguised my terror, and called out boldly—

“Who’s there?”

“It’s only me, Master Ernest,” replied the feeble voice of John Adams.

“What do you want?” I asked, flinging the door wide open.

“Are you ill? Is there anything I can do for you?” inquired the old man.

“No, I am not ill, and there is nothing you can do for me. Why do you trouble me with such an absurd inquiry?”

“I thought I heard you walking about, and that I saw a light in your room.”

“Why, I have not moved off the hearth-rug these two hours or more, and the only light here is that taper on the mantel-piece.”

“You are not angry with me, Master Ernest?” pleaded the old man.

“No, no; why should I be? You are very attentive. Go to bed at once.”

I watched the old man as he slowly walked away along the corridor carrying a lighted candle in one hand, and shading its flame with the other, and did not re-enter my room until after I had heard his door close.

This simple incident abated much of my courage, and caused me to postpone my visit to the crypt for a full hour. I was very anxious and nervous, but not to be deterred from carrying out my resolve. At half-past one o’clock I quietly emerged from my room, closing the door behind me as noiselessly as possible. In one hand I carried a lantern—lighted, but with the wick turned so low that it emitted only a feeble gleam—and in the other a riding whip without a thong, on the butt of which a heavy hammer was mounted—an instrument used by my sporting forefathers for opening obstinate



five-barred gates. I tried to persuade myself that I carried this weapon solely to assist in removing any lumber or other inanimate obstruction which might lie between me and the object of my search, and not for defence—an ingenious but unsuccessful attempt at self-deception.

The light from my lantern, feeble though it was, caused my form to cast an enormously exaggerated shadow on the floor and wall of the corridor. The carpets had been removed from the corridor and stairs, a circumstance I had not considered, and despite my soft slippers and careful tread, a distinctly audible and weird creaking proclaimed each step I set. I paused for a moment outside Old John's door. It was closed, and all was dark and silent within. The creaking of the stairs was so loud that had any inmate of our old house chanced to have been lying awake my errand must have infallibly been betrayed.

Once in the entrance hall, I again paused. All was still and quiet as the grave. Setting down my lantern, I took from my pocket a huge key I had been careful to abstract from its accustomed place a few hours before, and which opened a door in a stillroom at the back of the entrance hall, whence a steep flight of stone steps led down into the crypt. There was now no further danger of disturbing anybody, and I entered the stillroom with confidence, but was annoyed to find the door which opened on the steps that led to the crypt standing partly open; and reproached myself for my carelessness—for doubtless I was the last person there—regarding the circumstance as additional proof of my nervousness. However, it could not matter, and I pushed open the door yet wider and boldly descended into the crypt.

I had not visited the crypt since I conducted my aunt Gertrude through it, and perhaps less than half a dozen times before. Certainly I had not previously observed it so closely as I now did. It was a large vault, built entirely of stone, the mainway of which being an apartment about eighteen feet wide and as long as the house—that is to say, a hundred



and ten feet—with eight arched recesses on either side, whereof the one to which I was bound differed nothing from the others except in being closed by a brick wall at the front. The mainway was tolerably clear, but nearly all the recesses were filled with miscellaneous lumber, for the most part ancient and peculiar—terrestrial and celestial globes, telescopes, retorts, crucibles, and strange instruments of which I did not know the names, doubtless the whole of them long ago rendered worthless by modern and improved means of scientific investigation. Notwithstanding my extreme eagerness to accomplish the object of my visit to this place, I proceeded but slowly on my way, looking into each recess, first on the right and then on the left, resolving to thoroughly examine every object in it after I had informed my father of my magnificent discovery.

My spirits were greatly elated; for indeed it was scarcely possible that I should now be disappointed, my greatest fear—that the workmen employed about the house had been into the crypt to use it as a store for their tools and materials—being dispelled, for no sign of them or their belongings was anywhere to be seen.

In this mood I reached the Abbot's Cell, and, having turned up the wick of my lantern, stood before it and considered it. Yes, there it was; and its aspect was the same as when my attention was first called to it by aunt Gertrude. And now, how was I to remove so much of this brick screen as would enable me to get through to where the treasure chests were concealed? I observed with joy that the mortar between the bricks, from age and want of timely repair, was nearly all crumbled and gone; but though I could have drawn a few of the bricks out of their places with the aid of my hammer, I refrained from doing so for fear of the upper bricks falling upon me, which from their loose appearance seemed more than probable.

To get a couple of boxes, stand them on end one upon the other and mount to the top, was the work only of a few



minutes. I then applied my hammer as a lever to force up one of the topmost bricks, and was surprised to find that it was merely laid in its place and not attached in any way to its fellows. This was the case with another, and yet another. Why, all the bricks were perfectly loose—merely piled one upon another as a child builds houses with wooden blocks.

I removed more than a hundred bricks which formed the upper rows by simply lifting them one by one and laying them aside upon the floor. When a sufficient number had been removed to enable me to see what was within, I stood my lantern on what was now the top of the wall and, with feelings of intense satisfaction and delight, beheld several square black chests at the end of the recess. Forgetting in the excitement of the moment that the wall with which I was dealing was such only in appearance, I leaped on to the top of it, and by aid of my hands dropped down on the inside, pulling a large part of the structure inwards with me and dashing my lantern to the ground with so much force that the glass was broken and the light extinguished.

Fortunately I was not unprovided for such an emergency, as, being a smoker of cigarettes, it was my custom to carry fusees. I soon extricated my lantern from among the bricks which had fallen with it, and having re-lit it, proceeded to examine my surroundings. At the end of the recess stood the black chests which I had noticed from the outside, orderly disposed in three rows, three chests in a row—one chest less than I had expected to find. Looking about me more particularly, I beheld with dismay the tenth chest nearly in the middle of the apartment, with a half-burned candle protruding from the neck of a bottle and an ordinary up-to-date box of matches standing upon it; at sight of which my burning hope fell to zero. Having removed the candle and matches, I tapped the chest with my hammer; it was resonant. I lifted it; it weighed scarce ten pounds, and the lid fell off on to the floor. I held my lantern close and scrutinised it eagerly, and—O Hell!—it bore every sign of having been recently opened; the thick



black paint was grazed in a way that denoted the action of a double-pointed crowbar as freshly as if the chest had been forced open an hour ago. I stood it down, ran to the other chests, and quickly moved them from where they stood. Not one of them contained anything, but each bore the same unmistakable traces of recent violation as I had observed upon the first.

Mad with rage and disappointment, I quitted the recess in the manner I had entered it, pushing outward a lot of loose bricks in the act, and was striding rapidly along the mainway with intent to go at once to my father and tell him all, when an object met my gaze which arrested my progress and almost stupefied me with terror. In a recess near to the door by which I had entered the crypt crouched the figure of a man, his back towards me the better to conceal a small lamp which he carried.

I was never robust, and my breakdown at this critical juncture must in justice be ascribed to natural weakness rather than to cowardice. My first impulse was to rush at the intruder and strike him down with my hammer, but all power of locomotion had deserted me. I tried to shout for help; but my tongue refused its office, and, involuntarily relaxing my grasp of my lantern and weapon, I sank insensible to the ground.



## XV.

### FATHER AND SON.

An evil deed, by whomsoever wrought,  
Like fabled upas, broadcast spreads around  
A baleful influence, overwhelming all—  
The wronged, the wronger, and the friends of each.

“O ERNEST, my own dear boy, look up and speak to me like yourself,” said my father, holding my hand and looking down upon me with an expression of deep solicitude upon his kindly face.

I pressed my father's hand and regarded him steadfastly, but made no reply, feeling painfully weak and ill.

“Please don't irritate my patient, Mr Truman. With quietude, in a day or two he will be as well as ever,” said a voice at my side, which I recognised as belonging to Dr Thurlow.

For a few seconds it was difficult to realise my surroundings, familiar though they were. Yes, this was my room, and I was lying in my own bed. That was our housekeeper, sitting by the clear, low fire; and the sunlight, which the drawn curtains subdued but could not exclude, seemed to denote midday.

With a great effort, I suddenly sat upright. “Leave me with my father,” I cried; “I want to talk with him.”

“Not now, not now,” answered the doctor; “another time will do for that. You must rest.”

“No; now, now!” I exclaimed, with great excitement. “Father, send these people away.”

“My dear boy, be calm. I know all that you would tell me,



and care nothing about it. My only anxiety is to have you well again."

"No, no; you do not know. I must tell you now."

"Ernest, my boy, for my sake don't excite yourself. I say again, I know all that you would tell me. For two days and nights you have talked of nothing else."

"Impossible! Two days and nights! What do you mean?"

"I think you had better withdraw for a few hours, Mr Truman," said Dr Thurlow; "your presence disturbs my patient."

My father relinquished his grasp of my hand and moved reluctantly towards the door.

"Don't leave me, father," I implored, stretching my arms out towards him; and he at once returned to me. "Tell me, what day is this?"

"Wednesday."

"Wednesday," I repeated stupidly; "Wednesday. My father says to-day is Wednesday. Then all is lost," and I lay back again on my pillow.

"Yes, to-day is Wednesday," corroborated Dr Thurlow, gently putting back the hair from my forehead with his hand; "and before Wednesday comes again, I hope to see you on your pony, galloping past my house in your usual style. But you are mistaken in thinking that all is lost; on the contrary, nothing is lost. There have been no thieves here."

A long silence ensued, during which I lay quite still, my face towards my father, who had seated himself by the side of the bed. That two days and nights had elapsed since I went down into the crypt extinguished my last ray of hope of obtaining the sequins, and my normal calmness, to which I had been a stranger from the hour of reading my ancestor's Record, began to reassert itself. At last the housekeeper rose from her chair and noiselessly quitted the room. She was soon afterwards followed by Dr Thurlow, who whispered a few words to my father, and then departed on tiptoe.



My wished-for opportunity had now arrived, but I was careful not to lose it by too great precipitancy, recent events having taught me some policy, and I therefore allowed several minutes to elapse before I spoke.

"How was it that I came to be here? The last thing I remember is being in the crypt on Monday night, not long after my return from London. What has been the matter with me? Don't fear to tell me. I am nearly, if not quite, well, and it will relieve my mind to know."

"But Dr Thurlow has just impressed upon me that I am not to talk to you of that; he says it will distress you."

"It is only natural that he should think so; but he is wrong. If he only knew what I know, he would not have given you such advice. See, I am calm and rational. Do please tell me."

"There is really very little to tell you, and it is hard to refuse you anything. You must not let Dr Thurlow know that I have disobeyed him. On Monday night, or rather very early on Tuesday morning, John came into my room in a great fright, and woke me up. I thought the old man was mad, and for a little while in my sleepy state could make nothing of his rapid utterances and violent gesticulations; but at last he got me to understand that he had been unable to sleep, having heard strange noises in the house which induced him to go downstairs to see if all was right. He found the door of the stillroom open, and also the door which leads to the crypt. The old man had the courage to descend into the crypt, where he was horrified to find you lying, as he supposed, dead. He came up to me, as I have said, and as soon as I could make out his story, I went with him down to the crypt, and together we brought you up here. You were bleeding from a wound at the back of your head, and quite senseless. Everybody in the house was alarmed, and one of the women fetched Dr Thurlow. At first we thought you had been struck by a burglar; but Dr Thurlow disproved that by your wound, which he has shown was caused by a fall. Why you went into the crypt we know;



but exactly how you came to fall as you did you must tell us, if you can, when you get quite well."

"Why was it I went into the crypt, do you think?"

"We suppose you heard the same noises that old John heard, and went downstairs to ascertain the cause. It is strange that both of you should be so mistaken. Nobody had broken into the house; all the outer doors were fast, and nothing is missing. One circumstance none of us can understand is how a certain lantern came to be lying by your side; it belongs to the stable, and I have never known it to be brought into the house. But I am talking too much; Dr Thurlow will be back in a minute and lecture me for disobeying him."

"Your conclusions are as I thought they would be. Has Dr Thurlow gone home?"

"No; he is with John."

"Why with John?"

"The old man is very ill; he has not yet recovered from his fright at finding you as he did."

"Ah! I have much to tell you which should make you angry with me for concealing it from you so long; but you are so good and gentle with your foolish boy that I don't suppose you will be."

"My Ernest would have to act very differently from anything I have ever known of him to excite my anger," declared this best of fathers. "I have nothing to forgive; or if I have, I forgive you with my whole heart before I know what is the offence you charge yourself with."

At this point our colloquy was interrupted by the entry of Dr Thurlow. He stayed but a very little while however, and having expressed his satisfaction with the condition of both his patients, and promised to call again in the evening, he took his departure. As soon as the sound of his footsteps in the corridor had died away, I resumed the conversation with my father.

"Tell me what are the matters I have raved about since that night in the crypt," I said. "It may be that you know something of what I would tell you."



My father's face relaxed into a smile, and his eyes twinkled in a manner peculiar to him in moments of amusement.

"Oh, we will tell you about that in years to come."

"What was it I talked about?" I asked again.

"Many things. I don't remember a tenth of them."

"Tell me a few that you do remember," I urged.

"About vast stores of gold coins being stolen from this house—about the beauty of your aunt Gertrude's sister—about the Rev. Mr Price—and a lot of similar nonsense which I may perhaps recollect more of by-and-by."

"No, father; it was not nonsense I talked about, but sober fact; though maybe I didn't know what I was saying at the time. In very truth, as true as you are listening to my words, you have been quite recently robbed of an immense treasure in gold." And, raising myself on my elbow, I acquainted him as clearly and briefly as I could with the information I had obtained from Roger Trueman's Record, and of my consequent action and its result.

My father, who soon became deeply interested, suffered me to continue my narrative without interruption. When I had ceased speaking he made no remark, but rested his face upon his hands and appeared lost in thought.

After waiting some time, and finding that my father exhibited no sign of remarking upon my story, I asked him if he did not now believe that he had been recently robbed of a quarter of a million sequins.

"I believe I have been robbed of so much treasure," he assented; "but I hope and pray that it was not recent."

"What an extraordinary wish!" I exclaimed, astonished. "Surely the chances of recovering the treasure are much greater if it was lately stolen than they would be if it was taken away years ago."

"Do you know, Ernest," said my father, appearing not to notice my remark; "your uncle Sam was talking to me about that very treasure the first evening you saw him here."

"Then its existence was known to you both?"



"Not exactly. It was known to all his family that Roger Trueman—Roger the Renegade, or Roger the Alchemist, as he was variously called—brought with him from Turkey an immense treasure of gold and jewels ; but none of us ever knew what finally became of them, and for more than a hundred years nobody has troubled to inquire. But I have always understood that my great-grandfather spent years in a fruitless search for it, which I suppose has deterred his successors from wasting their time in the same way."

"What was it uncle Sam said to you about the treasure the evening I first saw him?"

"That he believed it was concealed somewhere in Holdenhurst Hall, and might yet be found."

"Then why do you hope that the robbery is not recent?"

"Don't ask me," exclaimed my father, starting up excitedly ; "I hate myself for my present thoughts. Tell me where to find that old manuscript ; I will fetch it and read it here."

My father walked to the other side of the room and took the book out of a drawer which I indicated. I had never seen him so strangely moved before. That he should be disturbed by the information just imparted to him was only what I had expected ; nevertheless his reception of my revelation surprised me. Though greatly concerned with the matter, and evidently considering all I had said, it was plain that measures for the recovery of the sequins engaged very little of his attention ; but I refrained for the present from remarking on that circumstance, and remained still and quiet while he sat by my bed and read his ancestor's Record. At last he laid aside the book with a sigh, and rising from his chair paced the room thoughtfully. After some minutes he suddenly paused before me, saying—

"I wish you were well enough to accompany me to the crypt."

I assured my father of my ability to do so without danger or even inconvenience, and was about to get up when he stopped me.

"Not until Dr Thurlow has seen you again, and then only with his consent."



"What nonsense!" I exclaimed, springing out of bed. "Because I have been disappointed and have knocked my head on a stone pavement you want to make an invalid of me. Surely two days is enough to spend in bed talking nonsense, especially at such a time as this when there is so much to do and consider;" and despite my father's protests I hastened to dress myself, assuming a smile and talking cheerfully all the while. But the performance cost me a tremendous effort, for I felt wretchedly weak and ill.

"Well, I suppose it must be so then," consented my father, when he perceived that my obstinacy was not to be overcome; "it will be best to make a careful examination of the place before your uncle comes."

"Before my uncle comes!" I echoed. "Is uncle Sam coming?"

"Yes, to-morrow morning. I telegraphed to him yesterday, informing him of your accident, and he replied that he would come down on Thursday."

"Ah!" I said, "he little knows what a story we have to tell him."

"I hope he does not, I am sure," said my father sadly.

"How strangely you talk, father! Surely you don't mean to imply that your brother has directly or indirectly stolen those sequins out of your house? I would stake my life upon uncle Sam's honour; and as for his wealth, liberality, and ability, you would not easily match them in another man."

To my inexpressible surprise and pain, my father ignored my question, merely remarking that he hoped no harm might come of my going down into the crypt, and that I must certainly be back again in my room before Dr Thurlow returned.

It was an hour past noon when we entered the crypt, my father walking first holding a lamp, for the place was as dark by day as by night. After pausing for a moment to observe a crimson stain which marked the spot where I had fallen, we proceeded at once to the Abbot's Cell—for my father, when he assisted in bringing me up out of the crypt, and again when



he went there with Dr Thurlow to explain to him in what circumstances I had been found, had not penetrated so far.

The crypt's store of surprises was not yet exhausted, whatever might be the case with its sequins, for walking up to the Abbot's Cell I saw with astonishment that it was closed by the brick screen as when my attention was first called to it. The bricks had been carefully re-p<sup>l</sup>aced one upon another precisely as I had found them on Monday night, or if there was any difference, they were built up somewhat more neatly; for notwithstanding the aid of my father, it took longer to effect an entry into the Cell than when I was unassisted. On reaching the interior we found that the candle and matches had been taken away, and the empty chest upon which I had seen them was placed with the other empty chests. All else in the Cell was unchanged.

My father spoke very few words during this investigation, and appeared greatly depressed, though, so far as I could make out, he cared but little for the loss he had sustained. He agreed with me (for indeed the evidences of it were undeniable) that the contents of the chests had been abstracted quite recently—probably only a few days before.

We left the crypt as we had entered it, my father locking the door after him and putting the key into his pocket. Coming out of the stillroom into the hall we noticed that the front door was opened as widely as possible, and that eight strong men were with much difficulty bringing in upon rollers an immense steel safe of enormous weight, the secure receptacle for our family papers which uncle Sam had promised to my father



## XVI

### EXIT UNCLE SAM.

Cruel must be the fates, and dark the day,  
When youthful love shall fail to find a way  
Its object to achieve. With ills opprest,  
The lover sighs and vainly seeks for rest ;  
Like the snared eagle, battling with his bonds,  
He fears yet fights, till pitying Heav'n responds.

"TRULY, the ways of parents are peculiar ! If you wanted your son knocked on the head, were there not people enough in London able and willing to execute your commission, but you must needs send for him to this place ? Come, tell me how it all happened."

Thus spake the cheery voice of uncle Sam as he entered our drawing-room the next morning after the events narrated in the last chapter. Though still depressed in spirit (now chiefly because of the horrible suspicion which I knew my father entertained), I was fairly well in health, and was dressed to receive our visitor. My father's melancholy was more apparent than mine, and his serious demeanour contrasted strangely with the buoyant gaiety of his brother.

"Ernest had an awkward fall on the stone floor of the crypt late on Monday night or on Tuesday morning, and lay there unconscious for some time before he was discovered. That is all," answered my father, "but he is nearly, if not quite, well now."

"On the floor of the crypt !" echoed uncle Sam, in a tone of surprise. "What the devil was he doing in the crypt at



that unearthly hour? No, no; I beg your pardon. Don't tell me, I don't want to know—I remember my own little escapades when I was about his age. Really, the faculty of blushing in a young man will delude even the old and experienced more effectually than the most skilful lying. So, Ernest, you young dog, you are no better than other people, eh? But enough of this. How are Knight and Faulkner getting on with the renovations? I hope they are pushing the work vigorously. I would like to see the place completed and decent before I return to New York. I gave them *carte blanche* to do everything necessary to be done, and particularly insisted on despatch."

My father looked intensely glum as he listened to this speech, and some moments elapsed before he spoke. As for myself, it was a considerable time before I could resolve my uncle's words; and desiring not to commit myself, I remained silent.

"Your judgment or motive is not so good as it might be in this case, Sam. My boy has discovered perfectly reliable evidence that a quarter of a million Venetian sequins were concealed by old Roger Trueman in the Abbot's Cell here, and wishing to pleasantly surprise me decided to withhold his information until he had verified it. This is why he visited the crypt on Monday night, when he found the place and the ten chests as indicated by Roger Truman himself; but with this difference, that all the chests had been opened and every sequin stolen."

"Stolen!" exclaimed uncle Sam; "how do you know that? And if so, how can you tell whether they were stolen a year or a century ago?"

"Very easily. By merely examining the Cell and the chests, and considering the attendant circumstances, any one endowed with common sense is bound to conclude that the robbery was committed as recently as four or five days ago."

"Positively you astound me. Have you examined your servants and Knight and Faulkner's men?"



My father shrugged his shoulders and smiled grimly. "There would be no use in that," he said.

"I think there would be very great use in it, and that it ought to have been done before. Really, you astound me. Tell me the whole of the circumstances as briefly and clearly as you can. At present, I am not at all satisfied with the matter."

"And I still less so. Ernest, tell your uncle all you know about it," and with these words my father rose from the couch on which we were all three sitting and walked through the open window on to the verandah.

With a fluttering heart I begun my task, describing the manner in which I had found and appropriated Roger Trueman's Record (which I read to him in full, having provided myself with the volume for that purpose), and with my subsequent proceedings. My uncle listened with deep attention, only occasionally diverting his eyes from me to look at his brother, who was restlessly pacing up and down the verandah. In this way an hour or more passed, and I had completed my story.

"Thank you," said uncle Sam, and pressed his hand upon his forehead, a habit of his when thinking. After a few moments he started to his feet and walked to the window, I following him. "Robert," he cried, "come here; I have something to say to you."

My father re-entered the room.

"Your son has read that Record to me, and explained how he found it, and what he has done and experienced in respect of it. I am not convinced that the sequins have been recently stolen, or that they have been stolen at all, though I perceive nothing improbable in either theory. Things quite as strange happen every day. But I have this to say to you. You have expressed yourself at least twice this morning in a manner I am not disposed to tolerate from any man, even my own brother. You have plainly insinuated, here in the presence of your son, that I pretended not to know the business which



called him to the crypt on Monday night, and that because of some motive—I think that was your word—of my own; and further, that I have better reason to be satisfied with this matter than you have. If by the latter you mean that a man who has not lost a quarter of a million sequins has better reason for satisfaction than one who has, I am content the remark should pass. But the first observation of which I complain admits of no sophistry. The only motive that could animate me in feigning ignorance of your son's business in the crypt would be to conceal that I was concerned in some way in the stealing of those sequins. And besides, I do not like your manner towards me. All my successes have been due to a good memory and the power to read the thoughts and moods of men, and the instincts which have earned me all I have would scarcely fail me in dealing with a man of your mental calibre. No; you must take my hand and assure me of your belief that I have never done you or your son the slightest wrong, and in particular that you are satisfied I know nothing about the treasure you have failed to find further than what you and your son have told me. Do that, and I am still your friend and brother, and will aid you with all the means in my power to solve this mystery. Decline my terms, and I will do my best to forget your existence."

Quite calmly but with terrible distinctness did uncle Sam thus challenge his brother. He had drawn himself up to his full height, and his head was set back a little further than was customary with him, yet one might reasonably have supposed as he stood waiting for a reply that he was engaged in nothing of particular import. Indeed, the expression of his face was not unlike that which he bore when uttering one of those cynical dogmas of which he had such a plentiful store, and he actually smiled as he listened to my father's reply—words which snapped my most cherished hope like a thread and plunged me to the lowest depth of despair I had as yet sunk to.

"Indeed I will do no such thing. Unasked and from my



heart I assure you that the goodwill I have ever borne towards you survives this affair, serious as it is ; but I cannot and will not comply with the terms you dictate, come what may. Surely you might have known that anything here was yours for the asking—that I would have given you anything I had so long as I retained a small competency for my son hereafter.”

Uncle Sam remained motionless and silent for a full minute or more after my father had finished speaking ; then, drawing a deep breath and uttering a hardly audible sigh, he rested his hands on a table, leaned forward, and fixing his gaze upon his brother addressed him with intense earnestness.

“My curse upon you for an unthinking, cowardly wretch ! This is the second great injustice I have suffered at your hands. May that moment be my last when I put myself in a position for you to mete out such treatment to me a third time ! Twenty years ago, by grace of a miscalculating, self-seeking hind, you married the girl whose love I had won—who had solemnly pledged herself to me. Yes, you married her knowing that I was her choice, and that her father compelled her to become your wife because of your broad acres. I complained not then *to you*, but went forth into the world trusting not vainly to Nemesis to avenge the wrong I had sustained. The sweetheart of my boyhood was not your wife for long ; and as for your Suffolk acres, what of them now ? They will scarce support the slave who ploughs them. Yes, Nemesis avenged your first injustice to me, and she will avenge your second. I had outlived almost the memory of that great wrong, and returned to you after twenty years, rich and influential, prepared to benefit you and your son in any way I could, and now, forsooth, in a half-hearted, cowardly manner, and without any sort of evidence, you accuse me of having robbed you of a quarter of a million sequins ! By the powers that be, I swear I never saw a sequin in my life, that I am not even sure I am correct in thinking it is a gold coin worth nine shillings and fourpence of British money ; but my supposition being correct,



can you think I would make myself a thief for five hundred and sixty thousand dollars?—I who on many occasions have profited more in one deal, and made eight times as much out of the Wabash pool alone. No, I am not a thief; or if I was, I should not come to Suffolk to practise my profession. It is possible you may live to be convinced of the cruel blunder you have made; but I care not how that may be, for you are already dead to me. Good-bye, Ernest, my boy. I am sorry for you. It is a hard fate to be the son of such a man, but you are not without hope. The son of a wise man is generally a fool, so by natural balance you should be wise, for you are certainly the son of a fool.”

He turned to go, but I clutched his arm and prevented him, crying out despairingly—

“O father, father, what have you done? Unsay your words, and believe with me that uncle Sam has done us much kindness and no wrong.”

My passionate plea received no answer. Uncle Sam gently disengaged himself from my grasp and moved towards the door. “If at any time you should need a friend,” he said, addressing me, “I hope you will think of your uncle. Stay; I had almost forgotten to give you this,” and taking a letter from his pocket he tossed it to me; but I was too dazed to catch it, and it fell on the carpet. Then, waving his hand in token of farewell, he hastily quitted the room and was gone.

I looked at my father. He was sitting on a low seat, his elbows resting on his knees, and his head buried in his hands. I spoke to him—I forget what it was that I said—but he took no notice of me, when through the open window I saw uncle Sam passing out of our gate. As soon as he was off our premises he stood still and looked intently at Holdenhurst Hall for a little while, then turned abruptly and walked at a great rate down the road which led towards Bury St Edmund’s.

This spectacle, in itself pathetic, and symbolising as it did the collapse of my fervent hope, enraged me. Being weak from loss of blood and other consequences of my recent



accident, I think my reason must have succumbed beneath my accumulated load of disappointments and anxieties, for in a sudden access of artificial strength I rushed at my father, laid my hands upon his shoulders, and forced him into an upright position, while I screamed out—

“It is false! it is false! I will go to my uncle and beg him to pardon you.”

My father started to his feet, and grasping me by the wrists held me at arms' length. “I would to Heaven it were false,” he exclaimed, “but it is true—too true. Shall I show you the proofs?”

“You cannot,” I shouted; “you have no proofs.”

Then for the first and last time in his life did my father burst out in anger against me. “Is everybody in conspiracy to madden me?” he asked excitedly. “I tell you, your uncle has stolen these sequins, and that recently. Still, I would not have told him so, or complained to any one, if he had not sought to extort a contrary declaration from me. Do you think I would denounce my own brother on doubtful or slender evidence? If *you* can think so badly of me, where then shall I turn for sympathy in my trouble? Must I publish what I would fain conceal in order to induce you to believe your own father? Look at that,” and he took from his pocket a large thin gold coin and placed it in my hand; “that is one of the sequins you went into the crypt to fetch—one of the two hundred and fifty thousand sequins you ought to have found there. Where the others are I don't know; but what I do know is that your uncle found means to convey them away from here about a week ago. I will tell you the details, if you want to know them, when you come to your senses and remember that I am your father.”

I sat down on a couch and burst into an agony of tears. In a moment my father was at my side holding my hands in his, and earnestly endeavouring to comfort me. Presently I grew calmer and got up—that unnatural and piteous product of adverse circumstances, a youth without hope.



The kindness of my father was such as none but the parent of an only child can understand. In endeavouring to alleviate my distress he appeared to forget his own. "This is a great misfortune," he said; "the greatest which has befallen me since your dear mother died; but we must try to forget it. I care nothing for the loss of the money—I would it had been sunk in the sea or that the Turks had had it—but I deplore my brother's conduct, more especially as he has won your goodwill, and I had hoped and believed that good would come of it."

After a space my father resumed:

"When you feel disposed to hear the story I will relate all the circumstances of your uncle's recent"—he paused, as if unable to find the precise word he wanted—"act, or Adams shall, if he recovers sufficiently to do so; he was an eye-witness of the—the act. But I have grave fears the old man will die, and even Dr Thurlow admits such an event is not improbable; he is an old man, and these troubles are more than he can bear. It pained him keenly to show what he did against my brother, for he was much attached to Sam as a boy, and often inquired of him after he had gone away to America."

"I don't want to know any more about it now, and perhaps I never shall," I replied, as I rose from the couch, picked up my letter, and opened it. It was from Constance Marsh, and ran as follows:—

NO. —, DE VERE GARDENS,  
KENSINGTON, W., April 22, 18—.

DEAR MR TRUMAN,—Many thanks for your kind letter. Pray accept my apology for having allowed it to remain unanswered for two days; but news of your having met with an accident followed so closely upon your departure that I have been in doubt whether to write or not, for letters are troublesome things to any one who is ill. I am so glad to learn from your father's telegrams that your accident was only slight, and shall be very pleased to see you back in London again—for, of course, you will return with your uncle.



We have seen a great deal of your Holdenhurst clergyman, the Rev. Mr Evan Price, since you were here. I hardly know which is the greater flatterer, you or he. Your uncle admires him very much, and has invited him to New York; he says he is a "smart" man, and ought to leave the Church and become a stockbroker.

With kind regards, hoping to see you to-morrow or the next day at latest, as well in health as when we parted, believe me to remain, dear Mr Truman, very sincerely yours,

CONSTANCE MARSH.

"Let me see that letter, please, Ernest," said my father, when I had finished reading.

I handed the letter to my father. "Poor boy!" he said, after he had glanced through it; "don't be cast down; you have seen nothing of the world yet: There are thousands and thousands of English girls in every respect as good as or better than this fair American. Cheer up. Everything is for the best."



## XVII.

### TO THE WEST.

He who is young should see the world,  
And he who fights with sorrow.  
Then start to-day ; you may be in  
Another world to-morrow.

O THE weary days and sleepless nights that succeeded the departure of uncle Sam from Holdenhurst ! Never in my life before had I been so utterly depressed and wretched. Every day some incident helped to confirm the overthrow of my aspirations, and increased my restlessness. In compliance with the earnest pleading of my father, I had written a brief note to Constance Marsh assuring her of my unalterable regard—that was the word he suggested as exactly suited to the occasion—but regretting the impossibility, owing to an unfortunate incident, either of calling upon her in London or inviting her to Holdenhurst. To that note came no reply ; nor could I in reason expect any, though each morning I scanned the mail with hopeless curiosity. About a week afterwards my father received a letter from the Rev. Mr Price announcing his preferment to the living of All Saints, North Brixton, and consequent resignation of the vicariate of Holdenhurst Minor. Mr Price also stated that as he was not to take up his new duties for three months, he had accepted an invitation to visit America, as he had long desired to study the methods and manners of American divines ; and that, being much pressed for time, he regretted his inability to return to Holdenhurst to preach a farewell sermon to his parishioners,



so had requested a friend to forward his effects to London—which I afterwards learned was accordingly done, the said effects consisting of two cricket bats, a fowling piece, a fishing rod and tackle, a tobacco jar and several pipes, a shelf-load of French novels with the margins annotated in the reverend gentleman's own hand, and some dozens of slippers. Yet a few days later, and while I was still smarting under this intelligence, I noticed, quite accidentally, an announcement at the bottom of a column in the *Times* that Mr Samuel Truman, the American financier, accompanied by Mrs Truman and Miss Marsh, had sailed for New York from Liverpool the day before on board the Cunard steamship *Etruria*.

Though his discontent was by no means equal to mine, my father was not without grave anxiety. The renovation of Holdenhurst Hall and the numerous and extensive improvements in progress on the estate were now fast approaching completion. The work was admirably done, and both house and grounds assumed an aspect incomparably superior to what they had presented at any former period of their history. My father acquainted me with the fact that he had very little money at his banker's beyond the five thousand pounds which his brother had given to him, a sum quite inadequate to pay for the work done, and he feared that he would be obliged to renew the mortgage which had so recently been extinguished. With some temerity he formally inquired of Messrs Knight and Faulkner what would be the amount of their demand on the completion of their contract, and was informed by that firm that Mr Samuel Truman had satisfied their claim in full on a certain date—which we found was the very day my uncle was last at Holdenhurst. This circumstance was a victory for me, who had held, contrary to the opinion of my father, that uncle Sam would keep his word, and honourably pay for the work he had ordered to be done, notwithstanding his denunciation of his brother.

The only thing which could have delivered me out of the pitiable condition into which I had fallen at this period (except,



of course, the removal of its cause) was rigorous employment of my faculties. Though I did not lack discrimination to perceive this truth, I could not benefit myself thereby, having no power to exert my will. My time was spent in aimlessly wandering about the house and grounds, or sauntering in the library and taking a book at random from a shelf there, opening it, reading a few lines, closing it again, and returning it to its place. I became pale and haggard, and my evident want of the usual attributes of youth was noticed and remarked upon by my father's friends, who were at a loss how to account for the change which had come over me.

Though the days seemed long and wearisome, and the nights almost interminable, yet time passed away with more apparent swiftness for being marked by no particular events. It was the early springtime when I first beheld the girl whom I had fondly hoped to win for my own, from whose sweet companionship I had been ruthlessly severed by the strangest of events ; and that never-to-be-forgotten season had merged into summer, which in its turn had declined and died, and now the autumn was at hand.

One glorious September morning I was listlessly gazing through the window which led out on to the verandah, my hands clasped behind me. From that spot it was I last beheld my uncle Sam as he stood in the roadway contemplating his birthplace, and my position induced a train of thought which could hardly be said ever to be absent from my mind. "Pshaw!" I muttered, turning suddenly round and walking quickly away ; "I am a very fool. Here am I pining miserably, wasting my life in unproductive thought. If action based on impulse be bad, surely prolonged contemplation out of which no action grows must be worse. Though Constance Marsh can never be mine ; though my father and uncle can never be reconciled ; I will not consume my days in useless self-affliction. I will travel ; I will go to America ; perhaps I will call on my uncle ; perhaps——"

"Father," I asked, a minute later, as I stood by his side in



the study, where he sat examining an account book ; "do you know what next Sunday will be ?"

My father looked up at me, and his face wore a puzzled, querulous expression. "Yes, my boy," he replied, and as he spoke I observed that his hair had grown very grey of late ; "I have not forgotten it. On Sunday you will complete your twentieth year."

"It is of that I was thinking," I said. "And I have also thought that a change of scene would be good for me. As you know, I have been very wretched since that affair with uncle—quite unable to fix my attention on any matter save that from which I would gladly divert it. If you can bear the expense, and do not object to my leaving home for awhile, I think I would like to travel for a few months."

My father looked up sharply. "Why don't you speak plainly, and say outright that you are tired of your father and long to be with your uncle?" he asked.

"Because if I said so I should lie," I retorted warmly ; "and that is what I never did yet. I have told you my opinion of my uncle ; and I think as well of him now as ever. But that circumstance does not diminish the affection and respect I bear to you. And I may tell you, that I have abandoned all hope of ever being anything more to Miss Marsh than I am at this minute. Indeed, it is to confirm me in my present mood that I seek the permission and means to travel."

"I take it as most unfilial, most unkind in you, Ernest," continued my father in an injured tone, regardless of the declaration I had just made, "that in all these months which have elapsed since your uncle was here you have never thought proper to ask me to show you the proofs of his perfidy, though I volunteered to do so at the time. You stated then (and now you reiterate) your belief in your uncle's innocence. What is the inference ? That your father is careless in a matter of the utmost gravity, on which the honour of his only brother wholly depends."



"Surely you don't wish to open that question again!" I exclaimed in dismay.

"Certainly I do," continued my father. "You tell me you wish to travel—at your age a natural desire, which I heartily approve and will provide money for. But you cannot leave here with my goodwill until you have heard and seen the things by which I justify my attitude towards your uncle. Having heard and seen them, you will be at liberty to retain or abandon your present ideas respecting the robbery."

"There is nothing I am less willing to be convinced of than my uncle's guilt, but let it be as you say," I assented; and, taking a chair, I seated myself close to the desk.

My father at once thrust his hand into his pocket, drew forth three coins, and laid them in front of me. "See," said he; "there you have three Venetian sequins. Do me the favour to examine them."

I picked up one of the coins; it was of gold, and as large as a halfpenny, but much thinner. On one side was a representation of a shield, with the words *SANCTVS · MARCVS · VENETVS +*. and on the other side a cross, with the words *PETRVS LANDO ; DVX · VENETIAR . +*. The coins, which were in excellent condition, were exactly alike. Having scrutinised each very carefully with the aid of a reading glass, I handed them back to my father, who paused, as if expecting me to make some comment; but I remained silent.

"Pietro Lando," said my father, "was Doge of Venice from 1538 to 1545; so you will agree with me that abundance of sequins such as these must have been in circulation in Venice when your ancestor, Roger Trueman, was there a century later."

I nodded assent, and my father continued—

"I am informed by John Adams (than whom a more faithful servant never lived) that your uncle, on the first day of his return here, seized the opportunity while you and I were preparing for dinner, to descend, unobserved by us, into the crypt. It seems he asked old John for a lighted lamp; and John, at



loss to know what your uncle wanted with it (for it was broad daylight, as you know), with pardonable curiosity, observed his movements, and was surprised to find that he boldly went down into the crypt. So little conscious was old John of playing the part of a spy that he soon afterwards followed your uncle and found him standing, lamp in hand, in front of the Abbot's Cell, probing between the bricks with a pocket-knife. John asked your uncle if he could assist him in any way, who thereupon turned upon him in great anger and alarm, cursing him for a meddlesome old fool, bidding him go to the devil, and much more of the same sort. A little later your uncle gave old John two sovereigns, and told him not to think seriously of what he had said ; that he liked to express himself emphatically. The incident impressed our old servant as a strange occurrence, but aroused in him no suspicion of foul play. When, however, on the occasion of his visit here with his wife, your uncle was observed to go down into the crypt a second time, and to remain there the greater part of one night, old John feared that some sinister design against my interests must be afoot ; yet he dared not again follow him, and refrained from reporting the circumstance to me lest, my brother having gone there with my permission, I should resent the imputation which the giving of such information would necessarily imply."

Again my father paused, as if expecting me to remark upon his narrative ; but I uttered no word, and he went on—

"On visiting the crypt the next morning John found that sufficient bricks had been removed to allow of entrance into the Cell, and entering there himself for the first time he observed that the place contained several heavy chests. Concluding that it was merely curiosity which had induced your uncle to visit the crypt, John did not go down there again until the day before you went to London, when the chests were all empty, and he picked up two of these sequins just outside the Cell. The third sequin was found by a housemaid in the bedroom occupied by your uncle and aunt, and was brought by her to me."



A long silence ensued, which both of us seemed unwilling to break. At last I said—

“And you are satisfied that uncle Sam stole those sequins?”

“Unfortunately, I am,” he replied, bowing his head. “I would to Heaven I could have arrived at some other conclusion. But it was not possible; the evidence was too clear, and admitted of no alternative.”

“The evidence is not clear to me. Might it not be that some person other than uncle Sam is the thief—old John himself, for instance—and that he is diverting suspicion of the real thief to your brother?”

“Ah, my boy, I have thought deeply of all that,” said my father, shaking his head sadly. “John Adams is an old man who believes he is without a relation in the world. He was in your grandfather’s service when he was quite a young boy, years before I was born, and has always shown himself truthful and honest. He doesn’t want for money, for not many months ago he told me that he had £600 in the bank, the result of his lifelong economy and self-denial. Now that he is old, and visibly nearing the close of his life, it is quite improbable that he would go out of his way to rob me of a large sum of money which could be of very small use to him. Besides, he was always an admirer of your uncle Sam; he frequently asked me for news of him, and expressed much pleasure when informed that he was coming to England. And then there are the circumstances of the case, all of them pointing one way. Did not your uncle himself speak to me about the treasure very soon after his return here?—a subject not mentioned by anybody for I don’t know how many years. And what of the sequin found by Phœbe on the floor of your uncle’s bedroom? And haven’t we seen what has been the effect upon John of the whole affair? Why, it very nearly killed him; and to this day he goes about the house the shadow of his former self. He has aged terribly. Dr Thurlow was remarking to me only yesterday how rapidly he is breaking up.”



"Still I am not convinced," I said; "but you make me doubt, which before I did not."

My father smiled faintly. "As you will," he replied. "That is as much as I hoped of you. And now to speak of a more congenial subject. I shall be sorry to be without you for a few months, though of late we have not been such good companions as we once were. However, what benefits you can yield me nothing but pleasure; so go, my boy, and peep at that world which you have not yet seen, and God be with you and protect you. I will impose no limit on the duration of your absence, and your means shall be the best I can afford. If it is your wish to visit your uncle, I have no objection to your doing so; but I have no message for him."

The rest of this interview was more affecting than interesting, and needs not to be chronicled here. Perfectly amicable relations, similar to what prevailed before I had seen my uncle, were re-established between father and son. But there now took root in my mind a horrid doubt of my uncle's honesty; and only those who have experienced it can know the pain of discovering a hideous fault in an idol which one has set up for one's self. And Samuel Truman had been to me as an idol. His coolness, his wit, his self-reliance, his magnificent success, had moved me to admiration of the man. If my uncle's unconcealed love of the power which money confers had indeed induced him to rob his poorer brother of a quarter of a million sequins, then was I sorry for humanity.

My father had given me £250; and on that modest sum I resolved to travel round the world by easy stages, so as to reach home again at the end of six months. My plan was to go direct to New York City (I could not make up my mind whether I would call upon my uncle or not, but at least I would look at the house where he lived, if only for the sake of my lingering affection for his ward); thence, but with many stoppages, across America to San Francisco. From the City of the Golden Gate I proposed to cross the Pacific to Australia, and after visiting the principal places of interest in that country



and in New Zealand, to return direct to the continent of Europe. In planning my tour, I was conscious of reversing the usual order of an Englishman's travels ; but a keen desire to see New York, the native city and home of Constance Marsh, had taken possession of me ; and I resolved to gratify it with as little delay as possible.

For the next few days I was busily engaged in preparing for my departure. Fortunately, my personal expenses during my four months of moping had been *nil*, and I now found the accumulations of my pocket-money for that period very useful in providing additional clothes, and other necessities for my journey, without encroaching upon my £250.

My unwonted activity benefited me greatly, and left no doubt that in the bustle of the busy world, surrounded by new scenes, the depression from which I had so long suffered would altogether pass away.

The eve of my departure arrived, and was spent in quietude with my father. All my arrangements had been made, and I was to leave for London by the first train from Bury St Edmund's in the morning. My fear that my father would again talk of our stolen treasure was ill founded, for he never once referred to the matter or mentioned the name of my uncle. He regretted that he had been unable to find out the whereabouts of Annie Wolsey, which he thought might possibly have been discovered had I been in a condition to assist in the inquiry he had made (which had not been the case), and furnished me with the address in Australia from which my grandfather had last written ; "though," he added, "I don't suppose there will be much use in your calling there, for it is more than likely that your grandfather is already on his way to England." I took the address and placed it in my pocket-book ; but the matter engaged very little of my attention.

When the hour of my departure had come, John Adams insisted upon accompanying me to the station. He had not taken the reins once since his illness, and was still in a very weak state ; but all that my father and I could urge in opposi-



tion to his wish availed nothing: the old man was obdurate, and with some skill turned our arguments against us by admitting his feebleness, and representing that it was not improbable that he might never see me again, but that he particularly wished for an opportunity to talk with me once more before I went away. The old servant prevailed, and after I had taken a most affectionate farewell of my father, we started for Bury St Edmund's.

As soon as we were on the high road the old man opened the conversation by observing—

“These be woeful bad times, Master Ernest.”

“Yes, very bad indeed,” I agreed.

“I hear as Sir Thomas Jarvis have four farms on his hands which he can't find tenants for, though he have reduced the rents somethin' wonderful.”

“I am sorry for it,” I said.

“Yes,” continued the old man; “and corn at twenty-seven shillin's! Why, the country will soon be quite ruined if them foreigners ain't stopped sendin' their cheap produce over here. You'll excuse me what I'm goin' to ask you, won't you, Master Ernest?”

“Certainly; ask me anything you please.”

“Well, I'm an old man—sixty-six come Michaelmas, though some folks tell me I look younger. Your father have been a good master to me, and I have saved more in his service than I shall live to spend. Knowin' how bad the times are for landlords, and that you're agoin' on your travels, I want to make you a present,” and the old servant placed in my hands a small canvas bag, such as is used by bankers, strongly fastened with coarse string.

“No, no,” I said, returning the bag; “I appreciate your kindness very much, but you must really excuse me. It would be quite wrong in me to take your money.”

There is no more potent despot than an old family servant. If he fails to work his will one way, he will succeed in another; and he has generally many strings to his bow. My protests



were powerless against the pertinacity of Adams. When, as I paced the platform of the station a few minutes later, I opened the bag and found that it contained fifty sovereigns, my conscience smote me for the uncharitable aspersion I had recently cast upon my benefactor. Though I lost somewhat in dignity by accepting this gift, I gained a welcome addition to my purse. Alas, that these two things should be so often inseparable!



## XVIII.

### NEW YORK CITY.

Behold a place of swollen Wealth and Pride,  
Where Vice and Want abound on every side ;  
A place to which the workless and opprest  
In thousands fly, seeking the spacious West :  
Which to a chosen few some riches yields—  
The nameless many lie in potters' fields.

I REMEMBER asking my uncle, soon after I first became acquainted with him, what sort of place New York was ; to which inquiry he made the characteristic reply that it was a very fine city, with more thieves to the square inch than any other place on the earth's surface. That was all I could get my relation to say of it. Bædeker's account of New York, my only reading while on the Atlantic, was more detailed but less interesting. Indeed one of the first things to impress a traveller is the inadequacy of all descriptions of places, for the faces of men do not differ more widely than their ideas of the sublime and beautiful, the sordid and hideous.

It was with great satisfaction that I found myself at last in New York harbour. The steamer which had brought me to America was of recent construction, well found, swift, and luxuriously appointed ; but none the less was I heartily tired of the voyage. My first forty-eight hours at sea had been spent in a way too common with travellers to need more than passing reference. Fear that the ship would go to the bottom soon changed to fear that it might not ; and that mental condition departed on the renewal of health and appetite. Then came the days on deck, spent in watching the restless waves and the magnificent rising and setting of the sun, varied by occasional



studies through a field-glass of some fifteen hundred Russian Jews huddled together on the forepart of the deck, the most filthy and repulsive mass of humanity conceivable—material destined for speedy conversion into American citizens. Bartholdi's statue of Liberty, the magnificent suspension bridge connecting the populous cities of New York and Brooklyn, the multitudinous ships from all parts of the world, and the commodious ferry boats keeping up continual communication between New York and various points in Long Island and New Jersey, taken altogether form undoubtedly one of the great sights of the world, quite captivating the stranger, and worthy of all admiration.

My foot first touched American soil at one of the slips on the North River, near Courtlandt Street. I at once engaged the services of an Irishman, the proprietor or custodian of a cumbersome four-wheeled vehicle something like the London growler may be supposed to have been in an early stage of its development; and having secured my portmanteau and hand-bag, the only luggage with which I was encumbered, bade him drive me to Gilsey House in Broadway. Immediately the vehicle begun to move I perceived the necessity for its strength, for the roads were extremely rough—in some places paved like the bye-streets of Norwich and other English provincial towns, with stones of the aspect of petrified kidneys. The fine width of the avenues and streets, and the height and grandeur of some of the commercial buildings, pleased me greatly, and I marvelled how the people of so fine a city should consent to have it in large measure spoiled by elevated railroads in some of its best avenues, and a double line of hideous wire-burdened poles in almost every thoroughfare.

Having secured a room at the Gilsey House, refreshed myself with a bath and a "good square feed" (to use the language of an American gentleman who sat next to me at dinner), I adjusted my watch to American time, lit a cigarette, and sallied forth into the street to observe the qualities of the people, or whatever else might attract my attention. It was



the first time that I had been so far from home, or had so much as £300 in my possession, and I greatly appreciated my responsibility, and felt very manly.

On coming out of the Gilsey House I turned to my left and proceeded what the New Yorkers call down town, until I reached the region of City Hall Park, Printing House Square, and Bowling Green, but where neither park, square, nor green may be found. I also went to Castle Garden; but no castle or garden is there—only an immense rotunda where the poorer sort of immigrants are received, examined, classified, vaccinated, and I know not what besides, preparatory to being despatched in thousands to the Western States. Having walked round the Federal Building or Post-office, as it is variously called, I entered it and covered myself with ridicule by asking a clerk who was busily engaged chewing a toothpick if he would oblige me with a telegraph message form.

“How long have you been in this country?” inquired the clerk, coolly disregarding my question.

“What has that to do with the matter?” I asked, rather warmly.

“A lot,” answered the clerk with imperturbable *sang-froid*. “I guess Jay Gould’s ghost will be seen walking up and down Wall Street the night before the country buys the telegraphs. Though he is dead, Jay couldn’t lay still and miss such a haul. Try Western Union Building, Broadway, left hand side.”

I murmured an apology, and withdrew as hastily as I could. I had forgotten that the telegraphs are not a monopoly of the United States Government.

It was scarce midday when I arrived in New York, and three hours later I despatched a telegram to my father informing him of my safe arrival. The month was September, and the fierce glare of the American summer had subsided and given place to beautifully clear bright weather which rendered walking very enjoyable, especially to one just released from the monotony of a sea voyage. Continuing my walk up



Broadway, I observed that the streets which ran out from it on each side were numbered, not named as in the older portion of the city about Castle Garden, and my heart beat faster, and my mind became confused with resolves and counter resolves, as I thought that each step brought me nearer to the home of her who had caused me to travel so many miles. What folly is all deception, and most of all that which is designed to deceive one's self! I had told my father that I had abandoned all hope or thought of Constance Marsh, and at the moment the words were uttered I had honestly believed them to be true; but now that I was within a mile or so of her home, and with nothing but my own will to restrain me from calling there, their unreality became more and more apparent. Should I call there? I had had no quarrel with my uncle. On the contrary, I had championed his cause against my own father; and that with what pain none but myself can ever know, for no words of mine can adequately describe it. No; I would not call there—at least not to-day. But there could be no harm in looking at my uncle's house. I would be careful not to be observed, and would not suffer any sudden impulse to induce me to break my resolve; if I went there at all it should be after maturer consideration. Full of these thoughts, I quickened my pace and soon found myself at Union Square, where I examined the few monuments and rested myself on a seat at the foot of the Lafayette statue. I did not remain there for long, but soon struck into East Fourteenth Street, and thence into Fifth Avenue, continuing along that fine thoroughfare of palaces until I reached East Thirty-fourth Street, into which, with much trepidation, I turned. No.—, a large house built of brown stone, was only a few doors off Fifth Avenue. I looked at it for a moment from the opposite side of the street, and noticing that a canvas shade projected from every window to protect the rooms from the sun, I crossed over and observed it more particularly. To do so did not engage me more than a couple of minutes, and I returned to Fifth Avenue and continued my walk up town until I reached Central Park, passing on my way



the magnificent palaces of many celebrated millionaires which I had not yet learned to distinguish.

After spending nearly four hours in wandering over Central Park, I began to tire. The park is admirably planned and well kept, and few strangers will willingly quit it before they have seen it all. A zoological collection, to which a part of the park is assigned, the deep golden tint of the declining foliage, the negro nursemaids with their white infant charges, and the numerous languages one constantly hears spoken among the people, were sights and sounds quite new to me, and interested me greatly. Though there remained much which I would gladly have noted, I wisely resolved to return to my hotel and get to bed quite early ; but whether on the following day I would visit my uncle or leave New York for Chicago I could not yet determine. Making my way into that main road which cuts Central Park in two, and is really a continuation of Fifth Avenue, I began to retrace my steps. It was now nearly seven o'clock, and the roadway was fairly well filled with carriages occupied by that section of society which had already returned from mountain, lake, or spring—for the exodus of wealthy New Yorkers from *their* City in summer is very complete. I was walking briskly along when a sight met my eyes which set my brain in a whirl, and in an instant threw me into all the pangs of jealousy. An elegant open landau, drawn by a pair of greys, in which, seated side by side, was the Rev. Mr Price and Miss Marsh, passed swiftly by and disappeared down the road.

Oh, the miserable weakness of man ! Or can it be that I am different from other men—that I am a feeble embodiment of sentiment and impulse, with no well-defined object rationally and perseveringly pursued ? It must be so, or human society could not endure. Yet am I powerless to help myself. I am as I am, and know of nothing in myself for which I should reproach myself.

Utterly depressed in spirit, and with an aching heart, I limped back to Gilsey House, wondering whether the dear



girl whom I loved was already the wife of the flippant English cleric I had despised. That might be; nay, I thought it not improbable. Or if not yet, doubtless it was to be. My mind was so busy that I did not notice the long distance I had walked. Five hours' walking, with but little rest, and no refreshment, immediately following the inactivity inseparable from a sea voyage, is not to be undertaken with impunity and when I reached the Gilsey House I was so footsore and faint that the lift attendant inquired if I was ill. I answered that I had over-fatigued myself; and entering my room, I threw myself, as I was, on to the bed.

After I had lain there about an hour a waiter came to my door and informed me there was a gentleman below who desired to see me.

"A gentleman," I echoed, starting to my feet. "Why, nobody knows me in New York. What is his name?"

"Mr Samuel Truman."

"Show him upstairs at once," I said; but the command was unnecessary, for the next instant my uncle entered the room.

"So I have found you at last," said uncle Sam, seizing my hand and shaking it vigorously. "I protest, you are the only man I would spend half a day in searching for. I called here less than an hour after you went out, and supposing you had gone to look at the city, I have been driving about New York ever since in hope of meeting you. May I ask why it is you have come here? Has anything serious happened at Holdenhurst—I mean, beyond what I already know of?—but stay; you look ill. I trust your father is not dead."

"My father was well eight days ago," I replied; "and I believe he is so still. As for myself, I have not been very well since you left England, and having decided on a trip round the world, I have made New York my first halting-place. I am pleased to see you, and hope my aunt and Miss Marsh are as well as you appear to be."

"Quite so, thanks: quite so. But why is it you have not



come to my house? From your valiant defence of me in that little affair, I concluded there were no differences between us. Was I wrong?"

"No, uncle, you were not wrong; but I was diffident of facing you and my aunt and"—I added after some hesitation—"Miss Marsh, after that wretched business: still, I should have called on you to-morrow if I could have screwed up my courage sufficiently for it."

"Well, you are a hypersensitive, goodhearted young cuss, and I am tremendously pleased to see you. Put on your hat and come along; my carriage is waiting. I will order your luggage to be sent on at once."

"No, no," I cried, catching hold of his arm to prevent him touching the electric push; "I am not well enough to come now. Allow me to stay here to-night, and I will come to your house in the morning."

"As you please, my boy. But what is it ails you? Upset by the voyage, I suppose."

"Yes; that and a long walk to-day have quite played me out. How did you know I was here?"

"I saw your name in the passenger list of the *Umbria* within an hour of her arrival, and from inquiries among the hackmen near where the vessel lies, I learned that a person of your description had been driven to the Gilsey House. I then came here, and was told you had gone out. Since then I have been driving about, looking for you at hazard. And this is the afternoon I particularly promised to take Connie out!"

"I am sorry you didn't do so," I said.

"And Connie yet more so," added my uncle.

"Could she not go out alone?" I inquired.

"Hardly. You see it was like this. Price (persevering fellow, Price!) had obtained a half consent from Con that she would go with him this afternoon for a drive; and she, relying on me to extricate her from the engagement, has got left, thanks to you."



"And so the Rev. Evan Price," I said, affecting only a languid interest in words which caused my cheek to flush and filled me with joy and hope; "and so the Rev. Evan Price is still in New York. When is he going to take up his new duties in London?"

"Never, I think," replied my uncle. "At present he is farming that job with a deputy while he is editing *The Investors' Guide*, a financial daily paper I have established here chiefly for his benefit. It's run on a plan of my own, and I feed it with tips; but it's a poor rag. Price is a clever, pushing fellow enough; but he can't conceal his hand—and that, you know, is everything in finance. However, he don't complain, for the *Guide* produces him more dollars than his church paid him pence."

"I wasn't aware that Mr Price had any literary ability."

"Well, he hasn't much, I believe; but if he had, he couldn't employ it to any appreciable extent on a financial paper. *The Investors' Guide* certainly affords a wide field for flights of the imagination; but then, you know, such flights must be confined within the narrowest possible limits, and expressed with consummate art, if they are to be effective. Journalism of every kind is rather flat just now, in consequence of a dearth of events of the first class—wars, earthquakes, pestilences, panics, and the like. Perhaps you have noticed for yourself what a fine crop of big gooseberries was raised during the summer, and how sportive the sea serpent has been."

"No: I can't say that I have. I was never a very diligent reader of newspapers; but I remember an article which appeared recently in one of our English reviews attacking the whole class of literature to which journals such as yours belong. The motives which the writer attributed to stock-brokers and their press representatives were very bad. Surely, the Law doesn't permit such people to rob the public?"

"Certainly not; that is a privilege which the Law reserves for itself."



"Does Mr Price find his new duties congenial?" I inquired. "You will pardon the question, but really they must differ so extremely from his life at Holdenhurst Minor that I am curious to know."

"He appears well satisfied," replied uncle Sam; "and his former calling causes his editorials to be received by people outside the financial rings with a trustfulness not always warranted by results."

"I dare say he is able to justify the change in his sphere of action."

"No doubt; he is a moral acrobat, and can stand upon his honour."

I had forgotten that in New York there is only a brief twilight, and was surprised by sudden darkness. My uncle rose to leave, and I accompanied him as far as the street. It had been arranged between us that I was to call at his office in the Mills Building at ten o'clock the next day, whence I was to accompany him to his house in Thirty-fourth Street. Greatly elated by what I had heard, which assured me the girl of my heart was not yet won by my rival, I re-entered the hotel, consumed an unreasonably large quantity of hot buckwheat cakes and coffee, and then retired for the night.



## XIX.

### MRS SAMUEL TRUMAN "AT HOME."

Though intricate the social plan,  
His chosen friends reveal the man.

"OF course you did not expect to find so many people here," remarked uncle Sam, as he introduced me to Mr and Mrs Stuyvesant Wollaston, of Boston.

"No, indeed I did not, uncle."

"I had forgotten that to-day was Mrs Truman's first 'At Home' since her return from Saratoga. This is Mr Increase Mather; and these are his partners, Mr Union Voorhees and Mr Austin Gilmer."

I bowed, and the next instant there entered Miss Eily Kennedy, Miss Bertha Kallmann, and Mr Dennis O'Connor, to all of whom I was introduced by my uncle.

"This is Mr Ellis Thomas; and these ladies, Miss Paulina Jackson and Miss Inez Juarrez"—the last a superb beauty of the Spanish type, with jet black hair and dark flashing eyes.

Already my uncle's guests numbered some seventy persons, and I was wondering how many more would come when Miss Hattie Christison and Mr Rosenberg were announced.

"Ah!" exclaimed uncle Sam, as soon as he caught sight of the latter; "this is my very special and most dear friend, Aaron Rosenberg. Ernest, my nephew, permit me to recommend that you make this gentleman's qualities your daily study; but sharpen your wits before you trade with him. Should you prevail against him, there will remain but one



merchant worthy of your prowess ; and him you shall know by his horns, tail, and trident."

"You flatter me much, Mr Truman," said the Jewish gentleman referred to, bowing very low ; "and yourself yet more ; for I notice that in all our transactions you invariably come off best."

Further discussion of this matter was prevented by the entry of another party of ladies and gentlemen ; and my uncle's drawing-room, one of the most commodious and richly furnished *salons* I have seen, soon contained as many persons as it would comfortably accommodate.

"Dear Ernest," said aunt Gertrude, laying her hand gently upon my shoulder, "I am so sorry that I have all these people here to-day ; but I had no thought of seeing you until it was too late to postpone my 'At Home.' Where have you been all day ? Your uncle told me you were to meet him down town at ten o'clock."

"Yes ; I met him at his office by appointment, and he showed me over the Mills Building and the Stock Exchange, and introduced me to some of his Wall Street friends. After that we lunched at Delmonico's."

Here my aunt had to leave me to attend to another guest who manifested a disposition to speak with her. I crossed the room to where the Rev. Mr Price stood talking with Miss Marsh—with whom I had not had more than two or three minutes' conversation, and that of a formal sort, immediately on my arrival—but he adroitly placed his tall, broad figure so as to exclude her from my view, at the same time showing her with much apparent interest some jewel he held in his hand, so that my purpose was for the present defeated.

"Come here, Ernest," my uncle called out ; and I at once went to where he was sitting with Mr Rosenberg and Mr Dennis O'Connor, the three apparently being engaged in some close argument. "What do you think we were talking about ?"

"Can't say," I replied ; "some matter of business, no doubt."



"Now there you are wrong. It is only on rare occasions we speak of business out of the street—I mean Wall Street. No; we were discussing Shakespeare—whether any one of his plays is so much better than the rest as to entitle it to be considered his masterpiece; and if so, what particular play deserves such distinction."

"You must remember," said Mr Rosenberg, "that I know Shakespeare only in Schlegel's translation."

"And that I have not read a line of Shakespeare for about twenty-one years," added uncle Sam.

"*Hamlet* is his finest play," I ventured to observe.

"Good; that is what I said," quoth Mr Rosenberg triumphantly.

"Well, I don't think so," said uncle Sam energetically, "and am inclined to accept Hamlet's definition of himself, that he was a dull, muddy-mettled rascal who didn't know his own mind, or who had very little mind to know. The whole play is nothing more than an ingenious sermon against the lazy habit of taking an afternoon nap, with interesting examples of the evils which arose out of a particular instance."

"You have seen *Hamlet* performed?" I inquired, astonished at my uncle's extraordinary opinion.

"Oh yes, several times; by Irving in London, Barnay in Berlin, and Booth in New York. And some years ago I saw it performed by a company of strolling players in a mining town in Colorado. The performance was given in a barn, and in the interval between the first and second acts Hamlet and Ophelia danced to a jig-like melody played on a tin whistle by the King, while Polonius and the Queen sold whisky to the audience."

"How horrible!" I exclaimed, with undisguised disgust. "It would positively make me ill to see the finest production of human genius presented in such a fashion."

"Do you regard *Hamlet* as the finest production of human genius?" asked uncle Sam.

"Undoubtedly. And for the second best production of



human genius I should turn to another play by the same hand."

"Well, I'm glad to find you've the courage of your opinions ; sometimes I've felt disposed to kick you for your invariable agreement with my remarks. Now *I* think *Timon of Athens* is Shakespeare's greatest play."

"*Timon of Athens* ! why, it is not much read, and seldom or never performed. Surely you are jesting, uncle. Why do you prefer it ?"

"Because it teaches a lesson which many men spend the greater part of their lives in learning, and not a few fail to learn at all."

"What lesson is that, Mr Truman?" inquired Mr Dennis O'Connor.

"That no matter how great have been the services of a man to his country, no matter how exceptional and varied his ability, if he be without money the world is either actively against him, or, what is worse, ignores him utterly. In *Timon of Athens* Shakespeare shows that notwithstanding the multiplicity of creeds professed by men the world over, Money is the idol worshipped by the vast majority of mankind ; and that too with a devotion unknown in the tabernacles of the hypocrites. Let him who doubts my assertion study the faces of the people in a church and the people in a bourse, and, having compared them, note which set betrays most earnestness of purpose."

"You observe other things besides prices current, Mr Truman," remarked Mr Rosenberg.

"Too exclusive devotion to an art is not conducive to success in it. I consider all that passes before me," rejoined uncle Sam.

"If that is so, your *protégé*, Price, will never become an American," said Mr Austin Gilmer, who had been attentively listening to this conference. "Have you noticed, Truman, how desperately hard that fellow labours to imitate the accent and expressions of New Yorkers ?"

"Oh yes, I have observed him," replied uncle Sam. "His



efforts to Americanise himself fail as ridiculously as the efforts of some Americans to Anglicise themselves. The transformation, if it comes at all, must come unsought, and is always of slow growth."

"I should know Mr Price for an Englishman if I met him in the moon," remarked Mr Mather. "As for his efforts to Americanise himself, they are worth so little to him that they have altogether escaped my notice."

"You are as heavy and dull as your Puritan ancestor," said Mr Gilmer to Mr Mather.

"As you please, Gilmer," replied the gentleman whose powers of observation were thus rudely aspersed; "but my dulness has permitted me to notice what marked attention Mr Price pays to Miss Marsh; and that is a subject on which I have heard nobody speak. Look at them now! By Jove, he is putting a ring on her finger!"

"Wrong again," said Mr Gilmer; "he is taking one off."

I looked to the corner where Mr Price and Miss Marsh were standing apart from the numerous small groups into which the assemblage was broken up. The last speaker was right. To my utter mystification I saw Mr Price withdraw a ring from one of the fingers of Miss Marsh's left hand, a proceeding against which she seemed to protest. But my rival succeeded in obtaining the ring, though apparently not without offending the lady; for she turned from him in a chilling manner, and, walking across the room, joined her sister.

What could this mean? It looked like—nay, it must have been—a lover's quarrel. And yet how strange! Surely no lady, and least of all Constance Marsh, would object to return to a gentleman a ring which he no longer desired her to wear; and it is equally certain no gentleman would be so ungracious as to press a lady to return a ring which she desired to retain. I could make nothing of it, and by the blank looks of my uncle and his companions I concluded they were equally at a loss.

"What do you say to that, Truman?" asked Mr Mather, after a pause.

"Nothing," answered uncle Sam, so coldly that nobody cared to pursue the subject further.



A minute or so afterwards our little group broke up, Mr Rosenberg and Mr O'Connor going over to Miss Kennedy and Miss Juarrez, while uncle Sam sought Miss Marsh, leaving me with Mr Gilmer and Mr Mather.

I watched my uncle very closely, and noticed that he questioned his sister-in-law. She related something to him ; and while she was speaking her mood seemed compounded of vexation and amusement, for at one moment she would frown and stamp her little foot impatiently, and at another break out into a merry laugh. Uncle Sam's face, at first serious, gradually relaxed into a broad smile as he listened, and indicated a man relieved of some anxiety.

When he returned he asked me to take a seat by my aunt. "She would like to speak with you," he said, "and now is a good opportunity ; see, she is alone. Go over there and sit down by her"—a surprising request, for I knew that my uncle had not exchanged a word with his wife for at least an hour. However, I was only too pleased to obey him ; and for the next ten or fifteen minutes I enjoyed an interesting chat with my amiable young aunt ; which occupation, agreeable as it was, was yet more agreeably interrupted by Miss Marsh, who came and sat down by her sister.

"Come here, dear," said aunt Gertrude, as she made room for her sister on the settee ; "where have you been all this long time ?"

"Oh, hiding away from that horrid man," replied Miss Marsh in tones of unmistakable annoyance. Her face was flushed and her lips slightly parted, and she was fanning herself with a vigour suggestive of anger.

"Hush ! here is a friend of Mr Price," said aunt Gertrude, looking at me.

"No, not at all," I asserted ; "I know very little of him, and don't desire to know more."

The sisters exchanged glances. "I am glad of that for your sake," said Miss Marsh. "He bothers me dreadfully whenever he comes here, and to-day he has made me downright cross."



"How was that?" inquired aunt Gertrude.

"He has a diamond," said Miss Marsh—"a large beautiful stone, I believe, but I haven't properly looked at it—which he is going to have set in a ring for me. I told him plainly that I had all the jewellery I required, and would prefer not to accept it; but he wouldn't heed my refusal, and asked me twenty times to lend him one of my rings as a guide to the size of my finger. Finding I really wouldn't do so, he caught hold of my hand unexpectedly and drew from my finger that little dress ring set with seven pearls which poor dear ma used to wear."

Oh, how I would have gloried in going to the Rev. Mr Evan Price, and after demanding and receiving back the ring he had taken from Miss Marsh, administering a condign thrashing to that relapsed humbug. But such a course was not to be thought of, for Mr Price could have thrown me out of the window with the utmost ease.

"Never mind; he will return it to you, Connie," said my aunt.

"No doubt; and the other ring that I don't want with it. But I know what to do with it," added the young lady, smiling. "Sam has promised to return it for me, and he expects to get a lot of fun out of it."

"What a pity it is that so well-looking a gentleman as Mr Price should bestow his attentions where they are not appreciated, especially when there are so many young ladies here quite unnoticed. Paulina Jackson has been all the afternoon seeking an opportunity to speak with him," remarked aunt Gertrude.

"Oh, help her to accomplish her wish for my sake, Gertie, there's a dear!" exclaimed Miss Marsh.

Mrs Truman rose and crossed the room to where Miss Jackson was standing alone toying with her fan, and at once entered into conversation with that lady—a tall, handsome blonde of twenty or thereabouts, who neutralised her natural advantages by an air of conscious beauty.

"When I parted from you at the door of my uncle's house in London, I did not think it would be so long before I should



see you again, Constance," I said, seizing my first opportunity to speak with her alone.

"Nor I," replied Miss Marsh, looking down.

"But it has been absolutely unavoidable ; I could not help myself."

"Could you not have written ?" she asked, suddenly turning her clear blue eyes full upon me.

"Hardly," I urged ; "at least not in a way that would have presented matters fairly to you. Of course, you heard of the trouble between my father and his brother ?"

"I heard there was some trouble between them, and that all intercourse was broken off almost as soon as it had been renewed ; but I have no idea what it was about."

"I will gladly tell you the whole miserable story ; but not now—it is too long. Meanwhile, you think as well of me as ever, do you not ?" I asked with great earnestness.

"I can't say, really. I am not quite sure that I do."

"But you will when I have acquainted you with my experiences. When will you give me an opportunity to do so ?"

"These people will be gone by seven o'clock, and then I will gladly attend to anything you wish to say. My sister tells me you are going to stay in your uncle's house for some time."

"Oh, thank you ever so much ! Yes, my uncle has kindly invited me to stay with him for a while. Look, here he comes."

"You are very quiet, Ernest," said uncle Sam, bustling up to me. "Do you wish your countrymen to lose their reputation for gallantry ? Come with me and I will introduce you more particularly to some of the ladies."

"I think I would prefer to remain here, thank you, uncle," I answered quietly.

"Oh, you would, would you ? Well, then, I'll stay with you ;" and as he uttered the words my uncle seated himself at my side. "That tall dark young lady you see talking with Mrs. Ollaston is Miss Inez Juarrez, daughter of a rich Paraguayan



mine-owner who was shot by the despot Lopez in 1870; she enjoys a pension from the Paraguayan Government, and owns a silver mine in her own right. That stout young lady talking with Mr Rosenberg is Miss Bertha Kallman, heiress of the largest brewer in America; her father's brewery near Cincinnati is like a small city. The lady on the right of them, with your aunt and Mr Price, is Paulina Jackson; her father is a banker in Chicago. That shrill-voiced little miss sitting next to Mr Thomas is Eily Kennedy, daughter of Michael Kennedy the Democratic Congressman. Of course, you have heard of Mike Kennedy, even in England; he is a fierce devil, the terror of the opposite party, and the torment of his own. Nothing political can be done here without the goodwill of Mike Kennedy—and for that, you know, he has to be paid."

"What sort of man is Mr Rosenberg?" I asked, desiring to exhibit to Miss Marsh my indifference to all other ladies.

"A stockbroker," answered uncle Sam. "He is a German Jew by birth, but has lived in New York nearly all his life. Without exception, Rosenberg is the sharpest fellow I have ever encountered. My admiration for his talents is unbounded. In matters of business I approach him only with extreme caution. Mather, Voorhees, and Gilmer are also stockbrokers; they operate together, but the combination can't hold a candle to Rosey. O'Connor edits the *New York Thug*, and Ellis Thomas lives at his ease on an enormous property his father left him; he don't engage in any business. Mr Stuyvesant Wollaston is Professor of Cosmogony at Harvard University, and Mrs Wollaston lectures on Women's Rights."

"You have not told your nephew about Miss Christison," said Miss Marsh, smiling.

"Ah, how stupid of me!" exclaimed uncle Sam; "I quite forgot her. Miss Christison is a doctor of medicine, and has practised surgery in I don't know how many hospitals. By her skill she prolonged for several years the worthless life of a wealthy cantankerous asthmatical old maid, chief pillar of the Women's Emancipation League, who bequeathed her fifty



thousand dollars a year for so long as she remains unmarried; should Miss Christison marry, the money which produces the income goes in bulk to the League."

I looked at the lady spoken of. She was not more than thirty, and her face wore a quiet, thoughtful expression.

"You look sympathetic," observed my uncle, who was watching me.

"Yes, I am sorry for her. The condition imposed by the old lady is absurd, and I am surprised Miss Christison accepted it, especially as she has a profession and is clever in it."

"Would you have taken the money on such terms, Con?" asked uncle Sam maliciously.

"Don't ask riddles," said Miss Marsh, rising. "See, our company are preparing to leave."

"So they are," said uncle Sam, consulting his watch; "I did not think it was so late. Con, my dear, oblige me by assisting your sister to bid these people farewell, and excuse me to all inquirers. Ernest, it wants but little more than an hour of our dinner-time, and there is much you must tell me before then. Come with me."

I followed my uncle out of the room and up the staircase, and so on to the roof of the house, which to my astonishment I found was flat, and provided with two bamboo rocking chairs, a table, a hammock supported on poles, and a canvas screen for protection from the sun when necessary. It was a beautifully clear evening, the sky being one expanse of unbroken blue, and the temperature not uncomfortably warm. Though still quite light, the electric lamps with which the Brooklyn bridge is festooned were already aglow, and showed like strings of pearls stretched at great height across the East river. I stood for some moments contemplating this sight and the great city generally, until recalled to myself by a tap on my shoulder. It was uncle Sam, and he motioned me to a seat, at the same time handing me a cigar. Having lighted one for himself, he sank wearily into a chair, placed his feet upon the table, and said—

"I want you to tell me all you know about those sequins."



## XX.

### THE OLD STORY.

How big with fate that hour in woman's life.  
When called to choose if she will be a wife  
With all her joys and pains ; or live a maid  
And, neither blest nor blessing, slowly fade !

"THIS is worse than I feared. My judgment has misled me ; I was too precipitate."

Such was the comment of uncle Sam on my story of the sequins. I had told him without reserve, and as accurately as I could, all that I had read, heard, seen, and experienced in respect of those fatal coins. He listened with deep attention, uttered the words I have set down, and then fell into a reverie in which he remained so long that at last I reminded him that we should soon be expected downstairs.

"Ernest," said my uncle, without noticing my observation, "from what you tell me I am now assured that your father *was* robbed of a quarter of a million sequins five or ten days before I left Holdenhurst ; and I am equally positive that the thief is none other than that lying hypocrite Adams. That I mentioned the legend of Roger Trueman's treasure to your father the evening I first saw you is true ; and I believe it is true that I again mentioned it when I went with him through the crypt a day or so later. The statements of Adams that he provided me with a lamp, that he afterwards found me in the crypt and spoke with me there, and yet later knew me to spend the greater part of a night in that place, are simply lies, which I could disprove to his utter confusion if only I had



an opportunity to cross-examine him. As I live, I swear I have been in the crypt of Holdenhurst Hall once, and once only, since I first set foot on this continent; and then, as I have said, I was accompanied by your father. Whether Adams has confederates or not puzzles me to decide. It is a great pity that so much money should be lost to your father. If only he had told me all that I have just learned from you, we had still been friends, and his sequins might easily have been recovered; now one is impossible, and the other improbable."

"If Adams is indeed the thief," I said, "it is clear that he has confederates. How about the sequin which a housemaid told my father she found in your bedroom?"

"If Adams is the thief!" exclaimed uncle Sam bitterly. "But, of course," he added, after a pause; "however well you may think of me, you cannot at present know positively, and of your own knowledge, as I do, that the account of my doings supplied by that damned Adams is lies, lies, nothing but lies. Why should that old man, whom I have never offended, so glaringly perjure himself in throwing suspicion of a crime upon me if not to shield himself? With regard to the sequin in the bedroom, it was placed there that it might be found and taken to your father. O Ernest, your father's want of acumen has played the very devil with his affairs; his patrimony alone has saved him from starvation. If he were here, no man would give a dollar for any service he could render. I must be growing like him if by to-morrow morning I have not thought out some plan which will checkmate a plot conceived and worked by a senile Suffolk thief. Let us talk no more of this matter to-night. Follow me."

My cheeks tingling with indignation which I did not dare to express, I followed my uncle down the stairs. Thoroughly vexed and pained as I was to hear my dear father so pitilessly disparaged by his brother, I was not at all surprised at uncle Sam's bitterness. Circumstances seemed now to show that my father and I had both fallen victims to the clumsy fraud



of an ignorant old man. But the situation had now become hopeful. If uncle Sam's theory was correct, as I hoped and believed it might prove to be, reconciliation of the brothers was not only possible but highly probable, my uncle's recent declaration to the contrary notwithstanding.

As soon as we entered the brilliantly lighted dining-room uncle Sam assumed his airiest manner, in no way indicating the serious thoughts which had occupied his mind a minute or so before. All the company, except Mr Rosenberg, had departed; and my aunt and Miss Marsh, who were dressed for dinner, appeared very charming in white silk robes trimmed with old lace, each lady wearing a girdle from which depended a superb fan ornamented with feathers and diamonds.

I shall not attempt to describe either the apartment or the decking of the table, being well assured of my inability to do so. Suffice it to say that both were as artistic and luxurious as the best artists in those things at the end of the nineteenth century can provide for men of lavish expenditure. The changes I had experienced during the last two or three weeks were already beginning to tell upon me; and it was with somewhat less than my usual embarrassment that, responding to my uncle's invitation, I took a seat at the table.

"I wish you would tell me where you got this wine from," remarked Mr Rosenberg, setting down his half-emptied glass of champagne.

"I imported a hundred dozen direct from France," said uncle Sam. "They are part of the vintage of some season between the reigns of Charlemagne and Louis Philippe, and were left by the latter monarch in the cellars of the Tuileries when he gave up the monarchical business. I bought them in Paris last year of a Jew who told me so; and who would ask for better evidence than that?"

"It is extremely good," said Mr Rosenberg.

"The evidence or the wine?" inquired uncle Sam.

"The wine," replied Mr Rosenberg, emptying his glass; "but the duty is very high; it is expensive to import."



"Yes, it is, if you don't know the Collector of the Port," agreed uncle Sam. "Ernest, my boy," he continued, "allow me to recommend you to drink five glasses of this champagne. I guess that will be *quant. suff.* to make you relax somewhat the restraint you usually impose on your tongue, and cause you to care as little for the world as probably the world cares for you—a highly desirable condition for anybody."

"Do just as you please, dear Ernest," said my aunt, "and pay no attention to your uncle's nonsense."

"To think that an Englishman should suffer his wife to publicly discount him in this manner, and not mind it much!" exclaimed uncle Sam.

"Do Englishmen in England beat their wives, Mr Truman?" inquired Miss Marsh, addressing me; "I have read somewhere that they do."

"No, Miss Marsh," I replied; "no *man* ever beats his wife either in England or elsewhere. And I don't think more wives are beaten in England than in other countries containing as many people."

"Do you know, Mr Truman," said Mr Rosenberg, directing his remarks to my uncle, "I have often thought that the quick perception and gaiety which distinguish Frenchmen is due in great measure to their habit of drinking champagne, just as the stolid, dull stupidity of Englishmen is doubtless owing to the beer they consume."

"A very good Roland, friend Rosey. I find nothing to object to in your theory except that it is an old one. Did not the English nobleman who declined to relieve a starving poet on the ground that it would unfit him for the composition of elegies by making him jovial entertain a similar notion?"

"I cannot say; it is very little that I know of English literature," replied Mr Rosenberg. "But really it has always seemed strange to me that Englishmen, who inhabit a country close to France, with a climate not greatly different from it, should make no wine."



"The people of England make nothing but speeches and mistakes nowadays," explained uncle Sam.

The severity of my uncle's strictures on the people and institutions of his native country had been an enigma to me for as long as I had known him. Most Englishmen when at home find delight in abusing the climate, laws, and customs of England; though usually they compensate for their ungraciousness as soon as they cross the seas, and, with equal want of discrimination, praise everything English. I expressed myself to this effect, adding that I supposed uncle Sam, by long residence and successful enterprise in America, had come to regard England as a foreign country, and that the bad treatment he had lately experienced there had quite extinguished what little sentiment bound him to his native land.

"No; it is not that," said uncle Sam. "The fact is, the English people are no longer a nation—they are the fools of words, the slaves of cheapness. England is now the refuge of the lowest types of European humanity, the sink for the surplus products of the world. At the same time that Englishmen supply funds for the expatriation of their own race, they tacitly suffer a civil invasion by hordes of destitute aliens, such as a nation with a territory as vast as that of the United States refuses to admit. As for Free Trade, that empty shibboleth wherewith Englishmen delude themselves; they do not enjoy it, nor has it ever existed. It takes at least two nations, each admitting goods without duty, to make a free trade—a spectacle the world has not yet seen. Englishmen are free to buy, but not free to sell; their policy, therefore, is misnamed. It should be called Free Importation. The markets of England are as freely open to the goods of a New York merchant, who contributes nothing towards the expenses of that country, as they are to the goods of a heavily taxed native—which sounds very generous and disinterested. But how much longer will Englishmen be able to afford such a policy? When I was last in London I had occasion to visit the docks, and walked there from Aldgate—which is cheaper and quicker than



traversing a Russian Jewish province, but otherwise not much different. On my way I passed, among other notable things, two abandoned match factories, and a long procession of unemployed men carrying banners inscribed with Socialist cant; while at the docks I saw several stacks of roughly hewn coffins, each closely packed with matches, which had just been landed (duty free, of course) from a Swedish vessel. Can the politico-economical system under which such things are possible be a good one?"

"What dreadful things you talk about!" exclaimed Miss Marsh. "I declare you sometimes give me the horrors. Have you made up your mind yet whether you will go to Mrs Van Rensselaer's reception at Tarrytown? Mr Rosenberg tells me he will be there."

"Does he? I am glad of it. He will oblige me by taking care of you and Mrs Truman, for I shall be unable to leave New York to-morrow."

Mr Rosenberg, in token of his acquiescence with this arrangement, gracefully inclined his head till the point of his long nose almost touched the lowest stud of his shirt front. After the remark by Miss Marsh, I did not care to re-open my conversation with uncle Sam; and for a few minutes silence prevailed.

As soon as dinner was over, we adjourned to the drawing-room, with the exception of uncle Sam, who betook himself to the roof to smoke, saying that he would prefer to be alone as he had a troublesome matter to unravel, and could not accomplish his purpose without consuming three cigars. "It is now," said he, glancing at his watch, "a few minutes past nine, and I may not see you again before morning, so good-night and pleasant dreams."

Dear old uncle Sam! How well I knew the subject on which he intended to exercise his thoughts, and how ardently I hoped a renewal of his friendship with my father would result from his deliberations!

Whether her womanly instincts had perceived the attraction



which her sister had for me, and her kindliness of heart prompted her to gratify me, or that it so befell of accident, I know not; but to my great satisfaction, on returning to the drawing-room my aunt at once entered into conversation with Mr Rosenberg, leaving Miss Marsh and me to pass our time as best we could.

What an evening was that! Why, I was almost happy; and really believe I should have been quite so but for the shadow of the estrangement between the two brothers whose lives were bound up with mine.

The conversation of lovers, so delightful to the parties immediately concerned, is notably uninteresting to everybody else; and it is not my intention to bring upon myself that ridicule which men past the amorous phase of their career so mercilessly and inconsistently mete out to their fellows engaged in it by recording in this place my conversation with Constance Marsh on that memorable occasion. Suffice it to say that in telling the tale of the sequins, which I seized this opportunity to relate, I greatly excited her sympathy. My long silence was forgiven as soon as its cause was understood, and it was clear to me that I had established myself in her favour more firmly than ever.

"I understand you will be from home all to-morrow," I observed.

"Yes," replied Miss Marsh. "I am going to Tarrytown. Mrs Van Rensselaer has just returned from Europe, and is to give a big reception."

"Where is Tarrytown, and who is Mrs Van Rensselaer?" I inquired.

"Tarrytown is a beautiful village on the Hudson, about twenty-five miles from here. Mrs Van Rensselaer is the widow of Martin Van Rensselaer, the railroad king. Everybody has heard of old Martin Van Rensselaer, who died two years ago worth fifty million dollars."

"Yes, I think I have read something about him somewhere," I said. "Tell me, Connie dear, will the Rev. Mr Price be there?"



"I don't know, I'm sure. I hope not," replied Miss Marsh.

"I am quite unable to express my delight that you entertain such a hope. May I beg you will increase it by telling me why you hope he may not be there?"

"Because he is a tease, and monopolises my time when he has the opportunity to do so," confessed Miss Marsh.

"If the Rev. Mr Price were to ask you to become his wife, what would you say?"

"The same as I have said before."

"What! has he asked you to marry him?"

"Dear me, yes. Lots of times."

"And what has been your answer?"

"No."

"Dear Connie! And if I were to ask you that question, what would your reply be?"

"The same."

"Do you like me no better than Mr Price?"

"O yes; ever so much better."

"Then who is it you prefer to either of us?"

"Myself."

"Connie," I said, taking one of her little hands and holding it tightly in both of mine, "I don't mind confessing to you that I was vain enough to hope your decision might be different. I would not ask you to marry me while I am poor; but all the world knows—and no place furnishes more examples than this city—that wealth is a thing which passes from hand to hand and is as often gained as lost. What if I were rich enough to keep my wife in the manner in which you have lived your life?"

"I was not thinking of money; my father left me more of that than I can possibly require in any circumstances. I don't think I'm much inclined to marry anybody."

"You may change your mind. Some young ladies who have talked as you talk now have afterwards become admirable wives. If that should be your case, what sort of man could you tolerate as your husband?"



"Not Mr Price."

"Dear Connie! And me—could you tolerate me?"

"I think perhaps I could if I tried."

"May I rest assured that, should you ever marry, it is my wife you will become? That provisional promise would make me happy."

"Take it then and be happy, you silly boy."

"Dearest Connie, I must seal this compact with a kiss."

"Not now, Ernest dear, not now. Hush! Leave go of my hand; here comes my sister and Mr Rosenberg."



## XXI.

### ANNIE WOLSEY FOUND.

Though thou art truant, still thou hast my love ;

Though thou hast erred, yet will I not reprove.

I think not of thy fault, but of my child ;

Then let us twain once more be reconciled.

THOUGH Constance Marsh had not promised to be my wife (indeed that could hardly have been, for I had not asked her for any such promise), her undertaking to accept me for her husband should she ever marry filled me with satisfaction. Her professed indisposition for marriage I regarded as a profession and nothing more--the bantering playfulness of a high-spirited, noble-minded girl. I had not lacked opportunities to observe that the ambition of every woman is marriage ; and that the few, the very few women who deny this assertion with words, illustrate its truth in the failure of their lives. The girl of my choice was intensely feminine, her nature unwarped by any of the pernicious humbug of woman's so-called rights, concerning which a shrieking sisterhood of the malformed, the neglected, and the deluded spoil much good paper and rend the air in many lecture halls ; and I did not at all doubt that I had now merely to raise my fortune to the level of hers to enable me to claim her hand and find my claim allowed. Love will lightly attempt tasks from which reason would shrink, and the difficulty of effecting the necessary change in my condition had no terrors for me, or I was too dazzled by the prospective prize to perceive them.

With an unquestioning faith in my uncle's perceptive powers,



I was now more than ever disposed to unreservedly accept his theory of the robbery of the sequins, and I resolved to neglect nothing that might tend toward their recovery. Filled with this idea, I arose early the next morning, resolved to discuss with him ways and means expedient for me, and was surprised to learn that he had arisen before me and was engaged in his study. My mental condition was such that it appeared to me impossible that another man could have affairs comparable for importance with the matter upon which the possession of my dear Constance more or less depended, and I did not in the least scruple to interrupt my uncle. I found him seated at his desk, writing with marvellous rapidity. "You come early," he said, looking up, but without for a moment ceasing to write. "Take a chair. I will talk to you presently."

Seeing that he was busy, I did not answer, but sat down as requested and listened to the industrious scratching of my uncle's pen. Presently the writer ceased, folded his papers, placed them in an envelope, on which he bestowed a vigorous blow at the sealing place, then threw himself back in his chair and folded his arms. He appeared to know perfectly why I had disturbed him at that early hour, though I had not yet spoken to him; and with his accustomed bluntness he at once grappled with the business he conceived I had come upon.

"With regard to those sequins," said uncle Sam, "I find no cause to revise the remarks I made about them last night. Adams, the butler, or whatever it is you call him, stole them; of that I don't entertain the smallest doubt. He may have been assisted by another of the Holdenhurst servants, or by one of Knight & Faulkner's men; but it is improbable. I have never heard it suggested that the old man was a thief; but I well remember his miserly habits of more than twenty years ago. Miserliness once acquired is never shaken off, but intensifies with time. What can be more reasonable than to suppose that when Knight & Faulkner were making the alterations in the Hall, the treasure was accidentally revealed to Adams?—who would be quite safe, he would think, in



concluding that its existence was unknown to your father or any other member of our family from the mere fact of it being where it was. Many people who can look with equanimity on piles of bank-notes are strangely moved at sight of a heap of gold coins, and find the infernal stuff quite irresistible. This I believe was the case with Adams ; and I base my opinion on his going so much in and out of the crypt about the time the robbery is supposed to have taken place, his strange finding of you there, his illness immediately afterwards, his lies to incriminate me, and his gift to you of fifty pounds. That last move of the old man was to salve his conscience rather than to benefit you. That conscience is a vile thing and troubles a great many people, I know well ; for I had a conscience myself some years ago. It was a great nuisance. However, I take only a remote interest in all these things, and but for your sake, don't care two straws what became of the sequins. Your father has treated me too badly for friendship between us ever to be renewed ; but I confess I should be gratified to learn that his frightful blunder has been demonstrated to him. This is my position ; and if you intend to try to recover the treasure—good ; I will help you with advice and money. Or if you don't think the amount worth the trouble, good again ; and we will agree not to speak or think any more of the matter."

At another time my uncle's declaration would have depressed me, for certainly there was but one thing I more ardently desired than his reconciliation with my father. But I was not now disposed to be easily depressed. On the contrary, to my eyes all things had put on a rosy hue, and I not only looked for the speedy possession of a quarter of a million sequins, and of Constance Marsh as my wife, but also for the patching up of the miserable feud of which uncle Sam had just spoken. Lovers' thoughts are so extravagantly fantastical that I was oblivious of the facts that the sequins might never be recovered, or if recovered were not mine ; that Constance Marsh had not promised to marry me ; and that my uncle had just repeated



the impossibility of renewing his former friendship with my father. In this cheerful mood I answered that I had fully determined to follow up the clue he had suggested, and was prepared to accept any assistance he might think necessary and was prepared to offer.

"Very good," said uncle Sam. "The case is a simple one. You have not to deal with an accomplished thief, but an ignorant old miser, who was overcome by a large temptation and has already manifested a symptom of remorse. The world knows nothing of its greatest thieves; their success prevents that. Your object, as I understand it, is to get a grip on those sequins; and mine merely to establish the fact that I had no hand in abstracting them. Am I right?"

"Quite right, uncle."

"Well, you have but to follow my directions, and I venture to predict you will recover every sequin before three weeks are over your head. Return at once to Holdenhurst, and for a few days closely observe every act of Adams; but be extremely cautious that the old man doesn't become conscious you are watching him. Talk to him freely; but make no attempt to sound him on any point which bears, however remotely, on the matter in hand. It is not unlikely your vigilance will be rewarded by valuable knowledge. About a week after your return send the old man on some errand which will keep him away from Holdenhurst for an entire day, and during his absence thoroughly examine his room and everything that is his. Don't scruple to turn out his drawers and boxes—his suspicious conduct fully justifies the act. Should you fail to find the sequins, when the old man returns, seize him by the throat and, forcing him against the wall thus"—here uncle Sam suddenly arose and, grasping me tightly round the neck with his left hand, pushed me backwards against a large cabinet with such vigour that I was almost strangled, and my white tie, which I had spent twenty minutes in adjusting, hopelessly spoiled—"tell him you possess the clearest possible evidence that he has stolen the contents of ten chests belonging to



your father ; that if he immediately restores what he has stolen he shall be forgiven, but that if he dare refuse or even demur you will at once hand him over to the police and charge him with robbery. Be intensely earnest in your manner, and let your subsequent acts accord with your words. If you don't find the sequins while Adams is away, your accusation on his return will throw him into a deadly terror ; he will fall on his knees like a penitent villain in a melodrama and give you information worth five hundred and sixty thousand dollars. If you find the sequins, you can afford to deal less harshly with the old man."

"Yes," I gasped, as soon as my uncle relaxed his grasp on my throat.

"Remember, you must not say a word of all this to your father beforehand," continued uncle Sam. "Your father is a fool, and a fool is always a marplot. Before you actually undertake the task, it is as well you should realise that success may amount to little more than failure. Your father may appropriate the whole of the sequins the moment they are recovered (for they are rightly his), give you half-a-crown for your pains, and send me a two-line apology on a postal card. Perhaps you may reasonably hope for more generous treatment ; but it's hard to say. Nothing is so difficult as to forecast the acts of an incompetent, stupid man."

Though my uncle's bitterness against my father was easy to understand, I found every exhibition of it hard to bear. It was not in my power to defend the man who had the greatest claim upon my gratitude, and whom I still preferred before all other men, so I remained silent. Something of the dejection his words had caused must have appeared in my face, for uncle Sam, taking my hand in his and holding it tightly, continued in a kindlier tone, while he regarded me steadfastly to observe the effect his words produced—

"If you cleverly carry out my suggestions, our family differences will be mended, if not ended. What in England is thought to be a comfortable fortune will be rescued from the



clutch of a contemptible old crank, who has gone wrong at the accidental sight of a heap of gold, and your father and you—or one of you—benefited to that extent. The friendship of your father I don't want (I am sorry to say anything painful to you, Ernest, but such is the truth); yet, I repeat, it would be a satisfaction to me to know that he had been brought to a knowledge of the wrong he has done me. These things it is in your power to effect; but to do so you must be cool and cautious, yet bold. Observe closely, deliberate profoundly; and, your conclusions once reached, act promptly and with vigour. Clothe your reserve in many words. When I wish to avoid making assertions, I talk most. Your task is not a hard one, and you have at least an average share of ability. If you had been my son, I would have subjected you to a training which would have enabled you to engage with confidence in a matter so simple and easy as this."

"I am sorry you have no son, uncle," I remarked.

"Reserve your sorrow for greater need," answered uncle Sam quickly, "and tell me, are you disposed to follow my advice?"

"Yes, uncle, I am," I answered firmly. "I believe your theory is correct, and I will do my best to carry out all you have proposed."

"Very good. Your prompt decision augurs well for your success. When will you return?"

"The sooner the better. Say next week," I suggested.

"Why so long delay?" asked uncle Sam. "The man is old and feeble, and whenever he dies no one will be surprised. Every day that passes tells against us. Let me see. This is Tuesday, and the *Umbria* leaves on Thursday; better let me book you a passage by her."

Thoughts of leaving my Constance almost as soon as I had found her again, and of immediately renewing the monotonous life on an Atlantic liner which only two days before I had abandoned with so much thankfulness, were far from agreeable to me; but I was now almost as eager as my uncle was to bring



the affair of the sequins to a termination, and therefore assented to this proposal also.

Uncle Sam was much gratified, and if he had not expressed his satisfaction in words (which he did very explicitly) the merry twinkle of his bright eyes and his pleasant smile would have sufficiently denoted it. He not only undertook to secure my passage to Liverpool in the *Umbria*, but insisted upon my accepting, then and there, a gift of one thousand dollars, which sum he handed to me in the form of thirteen United States bank-notes—seven for one hundred dollars each and six for fifty dollars each. “There,” said he, as he selected them from the thick packet of greenbacks which filled his pocket-book, “put those thirteen bills in your pouch. To-day is the thirteenth of September, and I dine at Knickerbocker Cottage to-night with the Thirteen Club. I have been a member of that club ever since its formation ; but though I was not superstitious when I joined it, I have become so since ; because, in reserving important affairs for the thirteenth of the month, in defiance of the old superstition, I observed that those same affairs invariably turned out well. And so you will find in this case.”

As my experience widened my shyness decreased, and at this point I informed uncle Sam of the impression which his fair sister-in-law had made upon me, and of the provisional promise which she had so graciously given me—a declaration which not long before I should have lacked the courage to make. My uncle listened with an amused smile, and when I had finished speaking, he remarked that he had observed almost as much for himself.

“The man who wins Constance Marsh,” said uncle Sam, “will have a wife wise, healthy, and wealthy. You will observe that I place these time-honoured qualities in the order in which they ought to be esteemed, but are not ; the second is largely dependent on the first, and the third wholly so. I wish you success in your amorous enterprise. I am the young lady’s guardian ; but I tell you frankly, I will neither assist nor retard your suit. I have seen something of the disaster usually



consequent on the interference of a third party in such matters. As society is now organised, marriage offers no scope for a broker; the business, to be successful, must be arranged by the principals themselves."

"This is as much as I could reasonably hope for," I said. "I was afraid you might resent my presumption."

"Dismiss that fear, my boy," said uncle Sam, consulting his watch, "and come with me to breakfast. I am twenty years older than you, and find myself no longer able to live upon sighs, kisses, and love missives. I am as hungry as a prairie wolf, and would prefer a porterhouse steak to the caresses of the most beautiful odalisque that ever reposed on cushions in the gorgeous East."

I followed my uncle downstairs into a room which I then entered for the first time, and was disappointed to observe that breakfast was laid for two. On inquiring the cause of this, I learned that aunt Gertrude and Miss Marsh, in preparation for what they expected would prove a fatiguing day, had ordered breakfast to be taken to them in their private rooms. On the table lay a letter addressed to me in my father's hand. My father had promised to write to me immediately he received a telegram announcing my arrival in New York; and I had arranged that his letter was to be forwarded to my uncle's house by special messenger the moment it was received at Gilsey House; but I felt sure at the time that my father would write to me within a day of my departure from home, so its presence on my uncle's breakfast-table occasioned me no surprise. On the contrary, I had been thinking that I might possibly hear from Holdenhurst this morning.

"Well, what news from Suffolk?" asked uncle Sam as he sat down, for his quick eye had perceived the English stamp and the familiar writing on the letter which lay on the table.

"I shall be pleased to tell you the moment I know," I replied, tearing open the envelope. And then the following lines, and all that they implied, were revealed to me.



HOLDENHURST HALL,  
BURY ST EDMUND'S, 3rd September 18—.

MY DEAR SON,—When you arranged with me the particulars of your tour, I voluntarily stated that I had no objection to your calling upon your uncle when you were in New York, should you feel disposed to do so.

You have been gone from home but one day, and in that short time circumstances have arisen which induce me to write to you at once, urging you very earnestly not to do so, or to in any way concern yourself with my brother or his doings.

About four hours after you left here I was startled by your grandfather calling upon me. As you know, I had not seen Mr Wolsey for four years, and during that time he has been round the world. I was greatly surprised by this visit, and much impressed by your grandfather's venerable aspect; he appears quite an old man now, and his hair and beard are almost white. His story is strange and painful. After being deluded by cunningly devised false clues for four years, he has at last found his daughter. She is at present staying with her little child at Bournemouth, but never remains at one place for more than a month or so, and lives chiefly on the Continent. I understand also that she goes to America once a year. The man who induced her to leave her situation in London, and who has since supported her in affluence, is no other than your uncle, Samuel Truman. Your grandfather has brought his daughter to admit so much; but despite his entreaties, Annie remains loyal to the father of her child, and can by no means be induced to terminate her relations with him. She begged her father so hard not to inform Mrs Samuel Truman of her existence, and threatened with so much earnestness to take her own life should he do so, that he at last gave her his word that he would not.

Your grandfather is staying with me, and is more contented than he was now that the mystery is made plain to him. Such also is my own case. Any shadow of doubt which may have lingered in my mind as to the Venetian treasure is now dis-



pelled. A man who will resort to villainy to accomplish one purpose will not scruple to employ it for another.

Do not neglect this injunction, my dear boy, but write as soon as you can, telling me where you have been, and how you have employed your time. When your money falls as low as fifty pounds let me know of it, and I will endeavour to send you some more.—Your affectionate father,

ROBERT TRUMAN.

“What is the matter now?” asked uncle Sam. “Have you any bad news? You look ill.”

“Yes, I have rather bad news,” I answered confusedly, “but I cannot tell you about it.”

“Why not? You promised you would show me your father’s letter.”

“Yes, that’s true. Shall I do so?”

“Of course. Stand by your word, whatever happens.”

I handed my uncle the letter.



## XXII.

### TWO CONFESSIONS.

"Love! What is love? Who can the word define?  
Sound, your conclusion; yet perchance not mine."  
Our neighbour hears us. "Both are wrong," he cries,  
"Throw lexicons aside; they're stuffed with lies.  
What each think's love is love to each, of course;  
A hast'ning snail seems tardy to a horse.  
To some, love is of all things most refined;  
To others—matter of another kind."

As soon as uncle Sam had read my father's letter he got up from the table and stood by the window for a minute or two, gazing at the street. Presently he resumed his seat, and handing me the letter, asked very quietly what I thought of it.

This question, coming from such a source, greatly embarrassed me; and my embarrassment was increased rather than allayed by my uncle's unexpected behaviour in these peculiar circumstances. Instead of indignantly repudiating the charges brought against him, or admitting their truth by some outward and visible sign of depression, he contented himself with merely asking my opinion of the matter, and while he awaited my reply sugared his coffee and buttered his toast with as great an air of indifference as if he had asked my opinion of the weather.

"I don't know what to think; my brain is in a whirl. I no sooner surmount one difficulty than I am confronted by another. Are the statements in my father's letter true?"

"You are too discursive," said uncle Sam. "Let us settle one thing at a time. If you don't know what to think I can tell you—at least so far as regards the subject of that letter. To



allow your brain to get into what you call a whirl whenever you receive unwelcome intelligence is bad ; you must conquer that weakness, or you will always be the sport of events. Of course, as soon as you surmount one difficulty, another difficulty confronts you ; it was ever so with every man, and you will find the process continue until you are confronted by Death—the last difficulty, not to be surmounted or evaded by any of us. As for your direct question, I unhesitatingly assure you that the statements in your father's letter (except where he seeks by a spurious analogy to associate me with the loss of his sequins) are perfectly true ; and not only are they true, but, as I regard the game of life, they are perfectly justifiable."

This declaration shocked me. I had never before met with anybody who entertained such unscrupulous opinions, or was so honest in the expression of them.

"Most people," continued uncle Sam, "would infer from that letter that I was guilty of great treachery to your grandfather Wolsey, whereas the very reverse is the case. I loved his eldest daughter (she who afterwards became your mother), and my suit was approved of by no one more than by William Wolsey. But when later on your father bent his glances in the same direction, that same William Wolsey discouraged my visits to his farm, favoured the visits of your father, and not long afterwards coerced his daughter into marrying him, well knowing that she had promised herself to me. And why was this? Not because of any fault in me, real or alleged, but for that sovereign quality in the new suitor—ownership of a couple of thousand Suffolk acres, forsooth !"

Here uncle Sam paused and laughed scornfully. Presently he continued :

"It was that circumstance which first gave my mind a cynical turn, and induced me to devote myself to the acquisition of money, which I conceived was the prime mover of our kind. Twenty years' experience has confirmed the opinion then formed. I have not gone out of my way to avenge the wrong old Wolsey did me ; but when about four years ago I



accidentally found an opportunity to gratify myself with the possession of one who greatly resembles the girl I used to ramble with in the fields and lanes of Holdenhurst, I did not restrain myself by any consideration for the man who had treated me so badly. Why should I? And after all, what harm has been done? Miss Wolsey is well, and enjoys a large annual income which I have settled upon her in terms I am powerless to revoke. That she has secluded herself from her father as long as possible has been her own wish, and was always a matter of indifference to me. She had no occasion to beg her father not to acquaint my wife with his newly-acquired information; he could tell Mrs Truman nothing which she does not already know."

Uncle Sam's sophistry was very fascinating to me. Systems of reasoning which in others I should have denounced as illogical and absurd, when presented in his words and with the ease and charm of manner for which he was distinguished, seemed to lack none of the essentials of truth. At first it appeared to me monstrous that a man of my uncle's means and experience should use his great powers to induce a young girl to abandon her only relative, and, in defiance of laws human and divine, made or adopted in the common interest, become his wife in all but name; more especially—if anything may be allowed to qualify for good or evil such an act—when he had a veritable wife against whom I do not think he could have alleged one fault. But my uncle's way of stating his case obscured these considerations, and led me rather to think of the perfidy of my grandfather Wolsey, which was the origin of the trouble, and to marvel how my father could have accepted for his wife a woman whose love he had not fairly won. That the statement was true I had no doubt whatever, for uncle Sam had very effectively alluded to the circumstance when he denounced his brother, and the latter had suffered it to pass without challenge. Another, though an entirely different consideration, afforded me much gratification, and that was the promptness with which my uncle had admitted the truth of the



charge now brought against him, which contrasted strongly with his strenuous denial of having had anything to do with the missing sequins, and afforded an additional proof of his innocence of that affair.

“What do you purpose doing respecting this little affair?” inquired uncle Sam after a long pause.

My mind was made up, and I answered without hesitation: “I will go to England in the *Umbria* and carry out the plan you have suggested. By that means, I hope, I shall convince my father that he has done you an injustice, and he will readily agree that our friendship shall remain undisturbed. Should I fail to connect Adams with the robbery of the sequins, then I will assert my individual right to unrestricted action; for I am nearly of full age now, and could respectfully and regretfully refuse to obey my father in this matter on the ground that his command is unjust and unnatural.”

“Bravo, Ernest; well resolved. I didn’t think you had so much grit in you. I would not have advised you in this case; but had I done so, I could have pointed out no fairer or better line of action. So much for that. Put your letter in your pocket and get on with your breakfast. What can I help you to?”

“I have not much appetite this morning, thank you, uncle. Another cup of coffee and I have done.”

“If it is because you are in love that you can’t eat, I will excuse you; but not if it is because matters in which you take an interest don’t go so smoothly as you could wish. If I had suffered my appetite to decline every time one or other of the scores of matters in which I interest myself ran off the line I had marked out for it, I should have been dead of starvation years ago. Exert your imagination, and—forgetting all about sequins, dishonest retainers, village beauties, and whatever else occupies your thoughts—bring yourself to believe that man was born chiefly for the consumption of food—which is certainly true of the greater number of us. Imagination will work wonders. I have seen a penniless beggar confined in an



insane asylum who has believed that he was a king, and been far happier in that belief than many a specimen of the real article surrounded by intriguers and fawning thieves. Now I have a proposal to make respecting this steak. You will observe that it is a very small piece—that it does not weigh much more than a pound. Well, get outside of that steak and this piece of bread, and I will give you a letter of introduction to Mrs Van Rensselaer, which will enable you to spend the day at Tarrytown with Connie for your companion; refuse me, and I will give such a letter to your friend, Mr Price, who yesterday asked me for it.”

The task imposed was a formidable one; but then the prize with which success was to be rewarded was so delightful, and the calamity assigned to failure so awful, that I addressed myself to it with great courage. But my gastronomical powers were not equal to the strain to which it was proposed to subject them, and before my task was half completed I pushed my plate from me and gave up the attempt in despair. My uncle, who had been watching me, generously forgave my shortcoming, and remarking that I ran better when spurred, invited me into his study, where he wrote as follows on the back of one of his address cards:—

DEAR MRS VAN RENSSELAER,—The young gentleman who will hand you this is my nephew, Mr Ernest Truman, of Holdenhurst, near Bury St Edmund's, England. He arrived in America a day or so ago, and we are his only connections here. Kindly receive him to-day, introduce him to your friends, and tell him all he don't know—as far as you can.

Very faithfully yours, S. T.

Sept. 13, 18—.

“There,” said uncle Sam, as he handed me the card, “that will do the business for you. Mrs Van Rensselaer owes me some gratitude for helping to settle her late husband's affairs, and she will be very pleased to entertain you. Con and your





"YES, DEAREST CONNIE, MY FATE RESTS WITH YOU."—See Page 187.







aunt will be delighted when they learn you are to accompany them. I have no doubt you will find a sail up the Hudson to Tarrytown very enjoyable. My yacht will be ready to leave Grand Street Hook at eleven, and it is now barely half-past eight. I have much to do to-day, and am going down town at once, so you must amuse yourself for the next couple of hours in any way you can. Hadn't you better send your father a telegram informing him of your intention to return in the *Umbria*? I am going to telegraph to England myself, and will despatch your message with mine."

I hastily scribbled in my pocket-book, "Truman, Holdenhurst, Bury St Edmund's, England—Letter received. Returning in *Umbria*. ERNEST,"—and tearing out the leaf handed it to my uncle, who having expressed his approval of it, wished me a pleasant day and disappeared down the stairs. A minute afterwards I heard the street-door close, and looking out of the window saw my uncle walking rapidly towards Fifth Avenue.

I turned from the window with very different feelings than were mine when I watched my uncle's departure from Holdenhurst. *Then* I perceived no ray of hope for the accomplishment of my desires; *now* my path seemed clear and easy. The girl whom I loved had gone so far as to declare that she preferred me of all men, and would never marry unless with me, while her powerful guardian, who had given abundant evidence of his prejudice in my favour, had just assured me that he was not opposed to my suit. But the estrangement of my father and uncle, my uncle's unfortunate connection with my youthful aunt Annie, and above all that disobeyed parental command which I carried in my pocket, were as three black clouds threatening to obscure the sunshine of my happiness. Now that uncle Sam was gone, his defence of his relations with Annie Wolsey seemed painfully strained and insufficient, and I could not but regard the circumstance of his *mésalliance* with her as another and formidable difficulty to be encountered in seeking to effect the reconciliation of the brothers. My conscience whispered that my right and proper course was to



obey my father ; but I was too deeply in love with Constance Marsh to dare to imperil my present amicable terms with her by offending my uncle ; and the twofold result would necessarily follow that course. When momentous decisions have to be made by the morally weak (and such was my condition at the period of which I write), then also comes suffering ; for it is the quality of weakness to shrink from pain, even when conscious that in so doing it not only postpones but accumulates disaster. Pondering these things, I slowly returned to my room to prepare for the excursion to Tarrytown—which luckily I had not done before, for my uncle’s practical illustration of the way I was to deal with old John Adams would have wrecked the toilette of a Suffolk farm labourer.

At half-past ten aunt Gertrude and Miss Marsh entered the drawing-room, where I awaited them in some trepidation ; for I knew that my uncle had not seen either of these ladies since he had arranged for me to accompany them to Tarrytown, and it was quite possible that they might depart without me, or that my company might be less agreeable to them than my uncle had represented. These fears were at once dispelled by aunt Gertrude, who, coming forward to greet me, assured me of the pleasure with which she had just learned that I was to be their companion for the day.

I expressed my thanks, and at the same time my surprise that she should know of this, for I was sure that she could not have seen her husband since I saw him leave the house.

“Oh, you don’t quite understand,” said aunt Gertrude, laughing ; “my husband is now at his office, and he has just been talking to me by telephone.”

Both ladies were dressed ready to depart, and looked very charming ; particularly Miss Marsh, who stood near to the open door, giving sundry pats and twitches to a refractory rose which could not be easily induced to repose in the bosom of a white muslin dress to the satisfaction of its mistress. As I observed this beautiful but silent girl waiting while her sister and I were talking, I did not think, and could not then have



believed, that it was she who had moved uncle Sam to furnish me with an introduction to Mrs Van Rensselaer. That knowledge did not come to me till long after. A wife is lavish of confessions from which a maid would shrink.

The journey to Grand Street Hook in my uncle's carriage did not occupy many minutes. Arrived there, we at once went on board my uncle's yacht—a small steamer, exquisitely designed and superbly fitted, a floating palace in miniature. The hour appointed for our departure had not yet arrived, but steam being up, and the captain understanding that our party was complete, the gangway was at once raised, and the *Iroquois* slowly steamed out from among the trading steamships by which she was surrounded and bore round into the North River.

September and October are the most pleasant months in North America. Then the fierce glare of summer has subsided, and the air is dry, clear, and exhilarating, and the foliage assumes a beautiful golden tint. In such a season a journey up the Hudson River is a very delightful experience. The American Rhine, as the Hudson is sometimes called, is inferior to the German Rhine in nothing but historical associations, though even in this respect it is not destitute. Precipitous banks, rising to a height of from three to five hundred feet, for the most part thickly wooded, among which here and there nestles a picturesque village or elegant mansion standing in its own highly cultivated grounds, enchant the eyes of the stranger for many miles along its course. Speaking for myself, I must say that I remember few if any days in my life upon which I have experienced greater pleasure than was mine on the particular thirteenth of September of which I now write.

That the companionship of my Constance (I had already once or twice so addressed Miss Marsh and she had not demurred to the style) had much to do with my satisfaction must be immediately admitted. Aunt Gertrude, with admirable tact, had begged Constance and me to excuse her continuing the perusal of an interesting book which she had brought with her,



and we (Heaven bless our charity !) saw fit to graciously grant the desired pardon, upon which she took a seat at the aft, and vouchsafed us no further notice until our arrival at Tarrytown.

The few hours remaining to me in America were rapidly wasting away, and I felt that I could not tell Constance of my resolve to return at once to England without at the same time informing her of the reason for my sudden departure. This I now proceeded to do. Having already acquainted her with the story of the sequins, I did not have to again go through that wearisome recital, but merely related uncle Sam's view of the case, and the advice which he had given me.

"And must you really leave for England so soon as the day after to-morrow?" asked Constance, looking up at me reproachfully. "Why, Ernest dear, you have only just come here!"

"I am sorry I must," I replied; "but I will stay in England only so long as it takes to recover those sequins, and will then return to you by the first steamer."

"Why, you may never recover them! How much are the old coins worth, all of them, wherever they are?" inquired Constance.

"Almost a hundred and seventeen thousand pounds," I answered.

"Oh, I don't understand that," said Constance; "tell me in dollars."

"Five hundred and sixty thousand dollars, exactly."

"Well, let them go, and trouble no more about them; they have already caused mischief enough. I haven't so much money at my banker's, but if you will abandon the pursuit of those sequins I will get Sam to sell out a little of my stock to-morrow, and give you a cheque for that amount. Will that satisfy you?"

"Satisfy me!" I exclaimed in amazement. "My dear Constance, how shall I answer you? Your generosity takes my breath away. I want those sequins for one reason only, and but for that one special reason I don't think I would interest myself about them at all, or certainly not much. If



only I could get those coins, their possession would give me courage to ask you to become my wife, courage I must always want while you are rich and I am poor. Love of you it is chiefly, dear Connie, which takes me back to England ; and also the honour of my uncle Sam which, as you know, is bound up with the recovery of the sequins."

"And if you recover them, you say you will return," remarked Constance quietly.

"Yes, dearest Connie ; and then my fate will rest with you."

"Am I to understand that if you fail to get that money I am to forget you?"

"No, do not do that in any case ; but I think I will be sure to get the sequins."

"Oh, Ernest, dear," said this artless girl, pressing my hand ; "come to me when you will, with money or without money, I am always yours. I can love none but you."



### XXIII.

#### AT TARRYTOWN.

Fear not the worst, but rather hope the best ;  
Be last to censure and the first to praise ;  
The good and evil always co-exist,  
And no man lives without a share of both.

PLEASANT hours pass quickly. When the *Iroquois* entered Tappan Bay, I was surprised to find that it was two o'clock. Aunt Gertrude—who had not spoken to her fellow-travellers once during the journey, nor, so far as I was aware, in any way observed them—now laid her book aside and came towards us. Constance and I—the former very quiet since her declaration of affection for me, as if abashed by that spontaneous avowal—also rose from our seats and went to meet her, and together we three paced the deck, aunt Gertrude pointing out to me where Piermont lay, and the course of the beautiful Palisades, and explaining to whom belonged the tasteful mansions with which the river banks were now thickly dotted. In this delightful situation, with one of these charming sisters on either arm—the more youthful and silent my very own, the other my near relation, wife of the man whom I most admired—I was intoxicated with my happiness, and felt how unworthy I was of my place—an image of Suffolk clay set between two jewels.

The *Iroquois* was now slowly approaching a landing-stage at the foot of a very steep bank, on the summit of which stood the Rensselaer mansion—an elegant structure of wood, with three verandahs continued quite round the building. The bank was cut into a series of terraces, each a carefully cultivated flower-



garden, connected by white marble steps flanked with copies of classical statues. All the doors and windows of the house appeared to be open, while dispersed about the grounds was a numerous party of ladies and gentlemen, some of whom were endeavouring to make out the *Iroquois* by the aid of lorgnettes.

"See!" exclaimed aunt Gertrude, with almost childish glee; "there are Mrs Van Rensselaer and Mr Rosenberg on the top terrace endeavouring to salute us."

Connie handed me the lorgnette through which she had just been looking, and I saw distinctly the two persons of whom aunt Gertrude had spoken. Mrs Van Rensselaer was a lady not much short of fifty, tall, stately, with clear-cut, regular features, and Mr Rosenberg, the curve of whose nose could not easily be mistaken, was by her side waving a white handkerchief.

Our journey, which had been a slow one, was now over. A large party was assembled on the landing-stage to receive us, including the hostess, Mr Rosenberg, and several persons whom I remembered having seen at aunt Gertrude's At Home. Mrs Van Rensselaer having assured me that any relation of her late husband's particular friend, Mr Samuel Truman, was very welcome to her house, we proceeded to pass upward through the terrace gardens, our hostess and aunt Gertrude leading the way, with Miss Marsh and I immediately following.

I had now obtained that for which I had so passionately longed and so often despaired, and the result was a buoyancy of spirit and a degree of courage which I had never before experienced. The confidence which is born of success was strong within me, and that awkward shyness of manner which had all my life marked me out for ridicule fell away from me as it were by magic.

Once or twice in our upward progress towards the house did we turn to look at the scene below, which was as beautiful as mind can conceive. The top terrace reached, we lingered for several minutes, and I expressed my admiration without reserve.



"I am always much gratified, I am sure, when an Englishman admires American scenery," said Mrs Van Rensselaer. "Some parts of your Thames, I think, are very charming and peaceful, but none so bold as this. My friend Mr Dennis O'Connor has brought an English gentleman with him to-day, who had a great desire to view the river from this point, whose praise is as unqualified as yours," and the speaker pointed with her fan to the lower verandah, where sat Mr Dennis O'Connor and Mr Evan Price, the latter puffing a cigarette and watching us with intense interest.

This little incident, which not many hours before would have greatly disturbed me, added to my gratification. Now, I thought, will I demonstrate to my rival that his suit is hopeless, and compel him to retire from the field.

"Connie," I whispered, "my own little wife that is to be, do you see who that is sitting there?"

"Yes, dear," she answered softly.

"He will find an opportunity to talk with you to-day, I am sure. You will know what to tell him?"

"Trust me," said my faithful Constance, returning the pressure of my hand.

"I will," I responded.

Never shall I forget the delights of that long autumnal day. It is true I was sometimes obliged to surrender my Constance to her lady friends ; but for the most part I contrived to keep her to myself, and was surprised to observe that beyond a formal bow of recognition when we first entered the house, Mr Evan Price ignored us both. I suspected that that transformed cleric was reserving what he had to say until he perceived an entirely favourable opportunity, and acquainted Constance with my suspicion, who agreed with me. These remarks were made in the blue drawing-room, where the greater number of Mrs Van Rensselaer's guests had assembled just as evening was closing in.

"If you leave the drawing-room by the door," said Constance, "and return again at once by the verandah, you can sit at that



small table at the back of that bamboo screen. From where Mr Price is now sitting, he can see your departure but not your return. If he comes to me, you will hear our conversation and can reappear to interrupt it at any moment you please. Give me this opportunity, dear Ernest, to set your mind at rest once and for ever as to whether I care anything for Mr Price or not."

"My dearest Connie," I exclaimed fervently, "I don't doubt your faithfulness the least in the world; nothing you can say or do can increase my perfect trust in you. But I will do as you suggest."

And the next minute I rose from my seat and walked away. To carry out the plan proposed by Miss Marsh occupied more time than we supposed it would. In the first place, it was necessary for me to pass along three sides of the Rensselaer mansion, which was of great extent, in itself the work of at least five minutes; but I failed to accomplish it in less than double that time in consequence of meeting my aunt and Mrs Van Rensselaer, who detained me with questions. However, I escaped from these ladies as soon as I decently could, and re-entering the drawing-room from the verandah, took up my position as arranged. Mr Evan Price was already at the side of my Constance. The expression of his face betrayed the earnestness of his purpose, and he spoke so low that, though I was less than three feet distant from him, it was with some difficulty that I could make out all he said.

"I cannot conceive why it is," he was saying, "that you should refuse to accept this ring. The stone is a beautiful one; I selected it with great care myself, and drew the design for the mounting of it. The mere acceptance of the ring will not imply that you are in any way engaged to me. You will only confer upon me a favour for which I shall always remain grateful. Let us agree that the gift signifies nothing; only accept it, I beg of you."

"I really cannot accept it. I told you I could not, before you had it made," answered Constance firmly.



"Why has this change come over you?" he asked.

"No change has come over me," replied Constance warmly.

"All I ever was to you, that I am now."

"I think you were more kindly disposed towards me when we were fellow-passengers in the *Etruria*, and I am sure you did not avoid me so carefully before the advent of that English country boy as you have done since."

"My recollection does not agree with yours, Mr Price. If it is your pleasure to construe ordinary American courtesy into the sort of kindness to which you attach a special meaning, I am not responsible for that. I regret it, but cannot help it. As for the English country boy you speak of, I must really ask you either to not refer to my future husband, or to employ a less offensive description of him."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Mr Price; "you are not mad!"

"O dear no," replied Miss Marsh very coolly; "I believe not. Are you, sir?"

"I am heartily sorry for you," said Mr Price, closing the hand upon which he had been exhibiting a very fine ring, and replacing that bauble in his pocket. "I should have thought that one Truman would have been sufficient for your family, if not for all America. If you knew all I could tell you, your plan for your future life would differ very widely from that which you have adopted, even if I were still excluded from it."

"If my sister's husband were here, I have no doubt he would be able to effectually reply to your insult," said Miss Marsh indignantly.

"I have insulted nobody," protested Mr Price. "What I have said is true, and so is what I am going to say. The English country boy who has been your companion to-day is unworthy of your hand. He is what I have called him—an English country boy, without fortune, experience, or, so far as I have observed, talent. He belongs to a family which has enjoyed exceptional social advantages for more than three hundred years, yet in all that time no one member of it has



distinguished himself in any walk of life. Such social position as has been theirs is now on the wane. The Squire of Holdenhurst has scarcely yet reached middle age, and a long time must probably elapse before young Ernest succeeds to his estate—a poor property, worth, perhaps, some six or seven hundred a year at most, decreasing in value every year, and perhaps soon to be confiscated by the revolutionary legislation which now prevails in England.”

“I know nothing of all this, and am not much interested in it; but my sister’s husband is a Truman, and the people here do not account him a dull man.”

“That is true, I admit. Still, if your sister were as free as you are now, I have that in my pocket which would prevent her marrying him.”

“Indeed!” exclaimed Miss Marsh; “that is more interesting than credible.”

“Still, it is true,” persisted Mr Price. “No family was ever more glaringly misnamed than that of Holdenhurst—it has never produced a true man; and the one clever member of it, your brother-in-law, counteracts his ability by his falsity. His faithlessness to his wife, to whose father was due his first step towards the great success he has achieved, is deplorable. The letter I have in my pocket reveals a state of affairs which in this country would enable your sister to obtain a divorce from her husband. Will you read it?”

“I take no interest in it, I assure you. My sister is happy, and has no wish for a divorce; but even were that not so, it would not be my affair.”

“Accepting as final your rejection of my suit, my last request—made to you in the hope that you will pause and reflect before you change your own fair name for the tarnished name of Truman—is that you will read this letter. It reached me this morning from the Rev. Mr Fuller, Rector of Holdenhurst Major. It is very brief, and will not engage your attention for more than two or three minutes. Surely, Miss Marsh, you will do so much to oblige a bitterly disappointed man.”



"Very well; I will read it since you so greatly wish it," and extending her delicate little hand, my Constance took from Mr Price a letter which he pleadingly extended towards her.

The first part of this colloquy greatly inflamed that consciousness of victory which had possessed me ever since Constance Marsh had declared herself mine. Mr Price's tirade against my family, and particularly his animadversions on myself, amused me. But it was plainly apparent that the perusal by Constance of a letter from the Rev. Mr Fuller, detailing the circumstances of my uncle Sam's connection with Annie Wolsey, might be fraught with very serious consequences to several persons. I resolved to interrupt the reading, and returned to my Constance as speedily as I could, this time happily without delay; but when I reached the other side of the screen, I found that Constance had risen from her seat, and that Mr Price was walking away from her, a malicious leer upon his face as he replaced a letter in his pocket-book.

"Well, darling Connie," I said, "I have heard nearly all. You are a brave, faithful little woman. But why are you so pale? Thank God, the worst that envious wretch can say or do is powerless to affect us."

"Oh, Ernest, dear, if only I was sure of that! Ten minutes ago I was happy; now I am very wretched."

"Why, what has happened?" I asked in alarm, and with dismal forebodings of the mischief my enemy had sown.

But at that moment the electric light was turned on, streams of people began to pour into the drawing-room from the terrace, and a German professor took his seat at the piano.

I sought to lead my prize out of the throng to some obscure nook, where, secure from interruption, she could relate to me the contents of the letter which she had just read, and we could together discuss its import; but failed to find an opportunity to do so. Aunt Gertrude, Mrs Van Rensselaer, and Mr Rosenberg now appearing, the latter began to rally me upon my monopoly of Miss Marsh. "It is not fair, you know, Mr Truman," said



that Jewish gentleman. "There is, I am sure, at least one other gentleman present who is partial to the company of Miss Marsh, and there are of course many others besides. As in most assemblies, there are more ladies present here than gentlemen. Will you permit me to introduce you to some of them? I shall be very pleased to do so."

"Perhaps you had better go with him a little while," whispered Constance; "I feel rather better now, Ernie dear, and will tell you all as we go home."

I turned, bowed to my future wife, and accompanied Mr Rosenberg to a distant part of the room.

"I am sorry that your uncle could not make it convenient to come here to-day," said Mr Rosenberg, "and so is Mrs Van Rensselaer. He works too hard, and allows himself too little relaxation. Did you know the late Mr Van Rensselaer? No? He was a man somewhat like your uncle; and so was Mr Marsh. I have often thought that if each of those three could have lived for a hundred years, and they had worked together, they would have owned North America between them. Your uncle's skill in bargaining is something marvellous—I would give a cool million to have his power for six months, and yet be dollars in pocket. Do you see that grey-bearded old man over in that corner by the side of the young lady in blue? That is Angus Mackenzie, the petroleum king, one of the richest men in the United States. When he came from Aberdeen forty years ago he wasn't worth ten dollars, and your uncle says his success has been due to a porridge-built constitution. Allow me to introduce you to Miss Mackenzie."

The young lady in blue rose, and was introduced to me in formal terms.

"And so ye're the nephew of Samuel Truman?" crooned Mr Mackenzie, who seemed very old and decrepit. "Well, well; it's a pity such a clever man should be without a son o' his verra own; but dollars won't get everything, and a nephew's no' a distant relation. If Sam is as fortunate in his nephew as ye're in your uncle, he's done well."



I did not care to enter into conversation with this old Scotsman, whose garrulous tendency was evident. Mr Rosenberg perceived the state of the case and hurried me away. Although not so deeply anxious as I had been before my Constance had given me her hand, I was much concerned in the unexpected event which had acquainted her with a matter I had hoped she might never hear of, and could not bring myself to take much interest in the various persons to whom Mr Rosenberg introduced me. Indeed, that gentleman noticed my abstraction and remarked upon it, but readily accepted my excuse (a very real and true one) that I found the new scenes among which I was cast, the presence of so many strangers, and the manners and customs of American society, in such violent contrast with my surroundings in an English village, that I was confused by the change; but that I hoped to be quite at my ease after a little more experience of these things. Mr Rosenberg then proposed that we should take a seat near to the piano, as Miss Inez Juarrez, who had a fine voice, was about to sing. I gladly agreed. The natural gift and the skill of Miss Juarrez were evidently known to the company present, for no sooner was it whispered that she was about to sing than a wide semicircle of admiring listeners was quickly formed in front of the piano, and among the foremost I observed my Constance seated between her sister and Mrs Van Rensselaer. She still appeared unusually pale; but when she perceived me her cheek slightly flushed, her eye brightened, and she bestowed on me a glance which caused my heart to flutter, and all care and anxiety to depart from me.

Miss Inez Juarrez had a full, rich soprano voice, which she controlled with admirable art. Her song was simple enough from a musician's point of view—the work probably of some South American composer unknown to fame—but it was as highly impassioned as the words to which it was wedded—words in the Guarani dialect, the language of the Paraguayan people.

Inasmuch as this song made a great impression upon me



when first I heard it, I have, long afterwards, attempted to translate it. My translation which I here give is, I know, defective; but it is the best I can make. If my policy were to conceal everything defective, perhaps no page of my memoirs would ever be given to the world.

## SONG.

One golden morn the god of Love,  
 Descending from his realm above,  
     Paused by a maiden's casement;  
 He heard within a gentle sigh,  
 And thought a tale might hang thereby,  
 For where Love is there Sleep must die—  
     Love, earthly thoughts' effacement.

The maiden's eyes were opened wide,  
 She saw her brave, and none beside,  
     Though he abroad was speeding;  
 Again she heard the vows he made,  
 When last with him alone she stray'd,  
 In Paraguayan forest glade,  
     Each other only heeding.

The Love-god with emotion shook,  
 And from its case a dart he took,  
     Which soon the skies was cleaving;  
 The sun-rays coursing in its train,  
 Reveal the distant faithless swain,  
 Who never will return again  
     To her he wept at leaving.

"Alas, dear heart!" the Love-god cried,  
 "Though I could place thee at his side,  
     I have no will to do it.

When men are faithless women weep,  
 Yet better thou thy state should keep,  
 For as man sows so shall he reap—

    Who break their vows shall rue it.

As the last plaintive note of the singer ceased to vibrate I narrowly observed aunt Gertrude, who had been an attentive



listener to this strange song ; but I failed to detect in the expression of her face any sign which could be interpreted as a silent recognition on her part of a parallel between the fable of the verses and her own circumstances. On the contrary, being asked by Mrs Van Rensselaer to sing, she readily complied, and charmed everybody present by her skilful rendering of an Italian romance.

Not so her sister, my Constance. For her the Paraguayan song seemed to have some special and painful meaning ; she became paler than before and with difficulty concealed her agitation.

These observations convinced me that uncle Sam had that morning deceived me when he so jauntily asserted that old Mr Wolsey could tell his wife nothing which she did not already know. I was not, however, so much interested in that consideration as in the disquietude of Constance ; and in hope that I might be able to comfort her, my aunt had no sooner taken up her position by the piano than I crossed over and occupied the seat she had just vacated.

The attention of the company was wholly bestowed upon the singer ; and the sound of another voice, though but in a whisper, would have been rightly regarded as an ill-mannered interruption. Though I could not for the moment speak to my fair one, I was able, even in that public situation, to press her little hand in mine with a significance which was not misunderstood.

Aunt Gertrude was followed by several other singers of various degrees of merit, but all alike in so far as they prevented conversation between Constance and me ; nor could I find any convenient opportunity to interrogate her until we were again on board the *Iroquois*. Fortunately I had not long to wait for this, for the river being a slow way to return to New York City, it was decided that we should leave Tarrytown early. We were no sooner on board than my aunt, whom I suspect partly understood the aspect of affairs, withdrew to the cabin to resume her book, leaving Constance and I to do as



we would. The evening being delightfully fine and cool, and the sky an unfathomable blue studded with innumerable stars, to say nothing of other reasons, of course we preferred to remain upon deck.

Notwithstanding my impatience to know precisely how Constance was affected by the information she had gained from Mr Fuller's letter to Mr Price, we were seated closely together for several minutes before I ventured to ask her, and when I did so my question received no reply, but hot tears fell upon my hand. I was painfully surprised and unnerved by this incident, and knelt down beside the distressed girl, saying I know not what, but doing all in my power to comfort her. After a little while she became more composed and looked at me steadily.

"My sister must never know of this," she said; "it would kill her."

"Must never know of what?" I asked.

"Of the contents of that letter Mr Price showed me."

"I have not read that letter, but I fear I know what you refer to," I answered.

"Your words confirm the letter. I feared it was true as I read it. Poor dear Gertie! and she is such a loving wife, and has such unbounded admiration of her husband. Can it be that all men are false?"

"No, darling, it cannot; but I confess I greatly fear there are many such. Speaking for myself, I swear by the sky above and the water beneath, and by the great Being who created them both, that you are the only woman I have ever desired; that if you will be mine and faithful to me, according to your promise and my belief, I am yours, and yours only, till I die. With your faith in mankind thus rudely shaken, and knowing that I must leave you to-morrow not to see you again for at least a month, can you trust me?"

Constance looked up at me, and the tears in her eyes glistened in the starlight as she softly replied—

"I will trust you."



I caught the dear girl in my arms, and, pressing her face to mine, for the first time bestowed upon her lips——

What is this I am writing? This will never do. On reading this page it really impresses me as more like a leaf from a novel than a passage from the memoirs of a middle-aged English squire.



## XXIV.

### THE ACCUSATION.

Assure yourself, each circumstance dissect,  
And think not proved that which you but suspect ;  
Few have the power to bless, but all can ban ;  
O woe to falsely say, "Thou art the man !"

HOLDENHURST village ! Was it possible that I had been absent from it but little more than three weeks ? The calendar affirmed that such was the case. Why, in those few days I had travelled further, seen more of mankind, and committed myself for good or for evil more deeply than in all my life besides. Yes ; this was my native place, unchanged in any respect, yet somewhat strange to me now that I regarded it in the light of an enlarged experience. There was the quiet, straggling street ; the old Norman church on the hill surrounded by moss-grown, half-obliterated stone memorials of bygone generations ; the Truman Arms, our village inn, with the carrier's horse drinking water from a trough outside while his master refreshed himself with ale within ; and the great iron gates of the Hall, surmounted by the heraldic device of the Truman family, a lion struggling in the coils of a python.

It was past midday when I entered Holdenhurst on foot, and the street was more than usually deserted ; but the village folk, with exception only of the very young and the very old, could be discerned harvesting in the fields beyond, while over the whole scene brooded that oppressive heaviness which in England not uncommonly heralds an autumnal storm.

As I had not communicated with my father since despatching



the telegram from New York announcing my intended return, no conveyance was at Bury St Edmund's to meet me—a circumstance for which I was inclined to be thankful, for my journey from New York, long and tedious as it was, had not sufficed for me to digest all my recent experiences, and I was anything but prepared to meet my father and John Adams—particularly the latter. A long walk alone on a country road I had always found a favourable condition for solving any problem which perplexed me; but to-day my specific failed to produce its usual effect; I was unable to shape or in any way adequately realise the results which might follow the doing of that which I had returned to England to do; and when I turned into the path which led up to the Hall, my mind was scarcely more clear than the sky above me—now more than ever dark, but emitting frequent flashes of lightning.

On entering the house, I was told by a servant that my father and Mr Wolsey were together in the study, and I went there to them at once without ceremony. Both were unfeignedly pleased at my return, my grandfather regarding me with much curiosity, and expressing his pleasure at my increased height and apparent health.

“To think that five years should make such a difference!” exclaimed my grandfather. “When I left Holdenhurst you were a mere boy; now you are almost a man.”

“Not quite?” I asked.

“Well, hardly,” said my grandfather. “A fellow-passenger of mine, a clever old fellow who came from Sydney to England with me, used to say there was no man under thirty years of age.”

“Your friend is wrong,” I replied. “A large part of the world's best work has been done by men when they were less than thirty. For my part, I am convinced that my judgment in general matters is as sound as it will ever be, and I shouldn't hesitate in making unassisted decisions in all matters relating to myself.”

Mr Wolsey seemed a little disconcerted by my vigorous



reply, and looked inquiringly at my father; but the latter, affecting not to notice it, turned the conversation by asking if I had a pleasant voyage to England.

"A very pleasant voyage indeed," I replied; "no such storm as this either going or returning"—for at that moment the rain was lashing against the windows with tremendous force, and thunder and lightning were almost constant.

"I was just completing an arrangement with your grandfather," said my father, speaking slowly, as he turned over a number of leases and agreements which lay piled upon his desk in front of him. "Mr Wolsey has agreed to settle down at Holdenhurst, though not as my tenant. As you know, I have no less than four farms at present vacant, and as soon as Mr Cooper goes I shall have another. To look for an agricultural tenant in these times is like seeking for the philosopher's stone, so I have offered your grandfather his old house (it has remained empty ever since he left it) and a small salary; and he has undertaken to superintend the cultivation of my tenantless farms. What with bad seasons, and the low prices at which foreign agricultural produce is put upon our markets, the farmers are really in desperate straits, and it's difficult to see what the end of it all will be. Nothing but a duty on the importation of corn, or a European war, can save them from ruin. Mr Fuller himself admits as much, though he doesn't see his way clear to pray for either of those things. Of course you are glad that your grandfather is to be near us again."

"Most assuredly I am, and"—I added with a sudden outburst of courage—"I am very pleased that he has accomplished the purpose which occasioned his going away. How is my cousin Annie?"

My grandfather seemed surprised at my question and remained silent, while my father glanced uncomfortably at us both.

"Is she quite well?" I inquired again.

"Poor Annie is better in health than reputation," said my father after a pause, answering for Mr Wolsey. "I am sorry



to say it, but my brother is a heartless villain. I never thought he was so black as he is."

"And I don't think he is so black as some people regard him," I answered, with unguarded warmth. "Is it not possible uncle Sam may be able to urge some consideration which will extenuate the fact that he took Annie away without her father's consent? Besides, Annie is old enough to know the consequences of her acts, and you say that my uncle treats her so well that she will not leave him. It seems to me that my aunt Gertrude is the only one who is injured."

"Did your uncle tell you to say that to us?" asked my two companions in a breath.

"No, indeed he did not; nor did he suggest any such ideas to me. I speak only for myself."

"Then I am sorry, Ernest, that you have no clearer ideas of right and wrong," said my father.

"Oh, as to that, different people view a matter differently. Even if a man were convicted of a particular offence, I should not regard that fact as proof of his guilt of another and totally different offence; but there are people whose ideas of right and wrong permit them to reason so."

I felt strongly for my uncle Sam, and could not hear the man who had been so extraordinarily kind to me abused without a feeling of indignation. As if to add force to my declaration, I had scarcely articulated the last word when a terrible flash of lightning brilliantly illuminated the almost darkened room, and was followed by a tremendous thunderclap which shook the whole house.

The veiled reference to the inference my father had drawn from uncle Sam's affair with Annie Wolsey did not escape attention. But my father was too firmly convinced that his brother had stolen the sequins to wince at any satire I was master of. Looking at me steadily, he said in a reproachful tone—

"You have been away from home nearly a month, and are no sooner returned than we almost quarrel, a thing we



never did till my brother came here. Has not that man caused mischief enough—to me, to your grandfather, to your cousin, to his own wife, and I know not who else besides—but he must need destroy all sympathy between you and me?”

“Not your brother nor any man could do that,” I asserted stoutly. “I am your son, and honour you as a good father to whom I owe everything; but none the less do I profoundly believe that you are the victim of a disastrous mistake; and I don’t despair of a day to come when you will be thankful that my opinion in the matter of the sequins differed so widely from yours. What if I were to establish beyond question that your brother never had anything to do with those sequins?”

“I should be immensely relieved and most devoutly thankful. But I have no such hope; common sense forbids me to entertain it.”

“And my common sense will not permit me to reject it,” I replied.

“That being so, it is useless for us to talk any more of the matter until you have something tangible to show in support of your views,” said my father, turning away.

“Quite so,” I agreed; “let us speak no more on this wretched subject until I have.”

The gong in the hall was sounding for luncheon, but could only be heard imperfectly amid the din of the storm, which still raged furiously. My father led the way to the dining-room, where luncheon was laid for three. There, nervously fussing about the sideboard and appearing older and more decrepit than ever, was the man who had occasioned my hasty return from America. John Adams regarded me with a puzzled look, and with that familiarity which is not unfrequently permitted in old servants congratulated me on my safe return from abroad.

We were no sooner seated at table than Mr Wolsey, with the laudable desire, as I thought, of preventing the conversation from running upon disagreeable topics, inquired how I liked New York, to which I answered that I thought it was a very



fine city generally, but that its harbour and chief river were magnificent.

"New York did not impress me so favourably," remarked Mr Wolsey; "it is evident that you have seen only the better part of that city. Vice in its most repulsive form is nowhere so openly flaunted as in the Bowery, while for squalor the East End of London can show nothing quite so horrible as Baxter Street. I was there for two months, and I never want to see the place again."

"I was in New York for only five days, and I hope to see that city again very soon. Indeed I am not sure but that I would like to live there entirely."

"The absence of a middle class corresponding to what we in England understand by that term," pursued Mr Wolsey, ignoring my remark, "strikes me as very bad for the whole of society there. Perhaps you did not observe that it is only rich persons who can afford to keep a house entirely for their own use, and that the smaller traders, artisans, and labourers are herded together in tenement houses—huge, unsightly barracks of great height, each accommodating scores of families. What can be said for such a system in a climate where in summer the thermometer commonly stands above ninety in the shade, and for weeks together there is not so much breeze as would flutter a leaf?"

"I noticed none of those things."

"They are to be seen by whoever looks for them," continued Mr Wolsey. "And then again, the conditions of life are every bit as hard as in London or any other great city. Work in New York is fully as difficult to obtain and is no better paid for, prices considered, than in any city of the old world. No intelligent American who has travelled denies this."

"I am afraid Ernest takes but little interest in public questions," remarked my father.

"They will force themselves upon his attention as he grows older," Mr Wolsey went on. "With but little modification my remarks apply with equal truth to Melbourne and Sydney, or



indeed any city of modern creation. In all of them the old-fashioned qualities of patient perseverance, abstinence, and thrift are as necessary to the amassing of a fortune as in England to-day, though they afford greater opportunities for the wily and unscrupulous to grow rich speedily in the manipulation of monopolies and public funds, and the practice of rascalities not possible in older communities."

"Isn't grandfather violating the agreement we made as we were coming to lunch?" I inquired of my father.

"The agreement was between you and me," said my father, smiling. "Mr Wolsey was not a party to it."

"I beg your pardon, I am sure," said Mr Wolsey. "That you should discover in what I have said anything to remind you of the man your father and you have agreed not to speak of, is as full an acknowledgment of the truth of my remarks as I could receive."

As I could not deny that this was the case, I remained silent, and my father took advantage of the pause to ask Mr Wolsey some question relating to farming in Australia, which effectually deflected the conversation from that dangerous channel into which it had again drifted.

Luncheon over, I withdrew, and was making my way to my room when I was stopped by a servant in the hall, who was bringing me a letter which had just been delivered by a mounted messenger. Hastily tearing open the envelope, I read:—

Mrs Andrew Butterwell presents her compliments to Mr Ernest Truman, and requests the pleasure of his company on Friday, the —th of September, to join a shooting party.

At Kingsthorpe Grange, 10 A.M., sharp.

CHEVINGTON,

BURY ST EDMUND'S,

—th September, 18—

R.S.V.P.



This communication was upon a card, lithographed in the usual manner, with the blanks for name and dates filled up in writing. I turned it over in my hand two or three times before I remembered the circumstances of the brandy-imbibing, troublesome old widow who was once my companion on a railway journey from London to Bury St Edmund's. Of course I would not go ; there was nothing to consider on that point : but it at once flashed upon me that this circumstance would afford the opportunity I desired for sending old John Adams away out of the house for the greater part of the next day—for Chevington lay some five miles on the other side of Bury, and it would take a messenger at the least six or seven hours to go there and return.

"Tell the messenger I am unable to give my answer now, but I will either come to Chevington to-morrow, as requested, or send a messenger to excuse me," I said to the servant ; and putting the card in my pocket I continued my way to my room.

Yes, I thought, this is a Heaven-sent opportunity, and will not only spare me sending to Bury to purchase something I don't want, but will keep the old man away from the house long enough to enable me to thoroughly examine everything in his room.

I opened my window and looked out upon the garden. The storm was subsiding, but rain still fell and there were occasional distant rumblings in the air. My spirit was as perturbed as Nature had been, but unlike Nature, was not tending towards peace. A vague presentiment, as of some pending calamity, deeply oppressed me.

Pshaw, I mused ; what humbugs men are ! My grandfather's words just now sounded most true and disingenuous ; his indictment of uncle Sam would have won the sympathy of any one who did not know that the old man was first to break faith in the matter of my mother's marriage. And my own father too, did he not avail himself of my grandfather's authority to effect what he failed to otherwise achieve, his fair fighting competitor being his brother ? Then there is my rival



—nay, my enemy—Evan Price. All that fellow said about our family was true; yet why did he say it? Because a rich and beautiful girl he desires has preferred me before him; therefore it is he hates me. Again, there is that ungrateful thief we have housed and fed for I don't know how many years—robbed us of a fortune and sown perhaps an irremediable enmity between two brothers. Certainly, but for the love of my Constance I should be disgusted with the whole world. Life is an inexplicable thing. Every man must fight for himself or suffer extinction. What a difference intercourse with mankind has made in the language and views of my grandfather! Before he left Holdenhurst he could scarce speak upon any subject but the seasons and crops; that is not so now. As for myself, I have largely increased my knowledge and courage, and if not yet quite happy, I must surely be so soon after I have accomplished the task I have come here to do.

That task! I could not get it out of my mind for one moment. Would that this day were over and to-morrow come! What a triumph my vindication of my uncle's honesty and the sudden possession of a large fortune would be! There was nothing but to patiently endure for awhile this mental strain, this chaos of inconsequent thought.

The day wasted slowly. I did not meet my father and grandfather again until dinner, which, thanks to the studied caution of all three present, passed without reference to any disputed subject. In the evening my grandfather filled the pipe with the large bowl which he had carried about with him from my earliest recollection, and in the intervals of his puffing related some of his experiences in Australia and New Zealand. Many of his anecdotes were interesting; but none so interesting to me as the information, casually disclosed, that my father and he would be absent from the Hall nearly the whole of the next day surveying our vacant farms.

That night I could not sleep, and the heavy hours dragged wearily. I was feverish and restless from suppressed excitement, and the first streak of dawn was the signal for me to



abandon my bed. I threw my window open wide. The day had risen fresh and fair, and the birds were busy seeking their food. Nature was refreshed by the storm of yesterday, and the aspect before me told of peace and re-animation.

I thought, perhaps a little sadly, of my old life at home before I had seen uncle Sam ; and of the great change which had come over my habits, thoughts, and hopes within the past few months, lamenting that extended knowledge should not always signify increased happiness, but too often the contrary. I endeavoured, but not very effectually, to comfort myself with the reflection that the matters which troubled my father and I were not of our creation, neither were they much within our control. The die was cast, and I must redeem my promise to my uncle ; there was no escape from it now, however distasteful the task. The honour of our whole family, and my own personal interest, largely depended on the issue.

At breakfast my father and Mr Wolsey talked very freely, but still carefully avoided any reference to uncle Sam. The former was particularly considerate, and asked me to accompany him over the vacant farms in the old kind way in which he had always been used to speak to me, so that I was hard put to it to excuse myself.

My father and Mr Wolsey were no sooner departed than I sought John Adams, and found the old man in the stable polishing a harness.

"John," I said, "put the bay mare in the dog-cart while I go in the house to write a note. I want you to go to Chevington at once."

"To Chevington, Master Ernest?" the old man echoed in a tone of surprise.

"Yes, to Chevington, I repeated. "Look sharp ; there's no time to lose. I shall be back again in two or three minutes."

When I returned with my hastily scribbled apology Adams was backing the mare into the shafts, and very soon afterwards was ready to start on his journey.

"Take this," I said, giving the old man the letter, "and



deliver it to Mrs Butterwell, at Kingsthorpe Grange, Chevington. Don't drive the mare too fast; give her a good bait and at least an hour's rest at Chevington."

"Will there be any answer to the letter?" inquired the old man.

"I don't know; possibly there may be."

I went to the gate and watched the old man drive away until he was lost to my sight in the bend of the road, and then, returning into the house, went direct to Adams' bedroom.

So far as I remembered, I had never been in that room in my life, though I perfectly well knew which room it was. To my great annoyance, I found that the door was securely locked. After considering this circumstance for some moments, I decided not to ring for a servant but to go myself to the kitchen.

In the kitchen my unexpected presence created surprise, and the housekeeper came forward to meet me.

"There is something in Adams' bedroom I want; he has just gone out, and the door appears to be locked. Do you know where I can find the key?" I asked.

"He always carries it about with him."

"What!" I exclaimed; "does he clean his own room and keep it locked?"

"Yes, sir," answered the housekeeper.

"How long has this been?" I inquired.

"Years and years; I can't tell you how long," said the woman, smiling.

I waited no longer, but went at once to a granary at the back of the stable where a tall ladder was kept. Though the door of Adams' bedroom was locked, the window, I had noticed, was open. By that means would I get into the room, if possible; if not, then would I break into it by force.

With no attempt at concealment, I brought the ladder and placed it under Adams' window. It was an ancient window or casement, consisting of small panes of glass set in lead; and it opened like a door, with a rack and pinion to prevent



it flapping in the wind. Through this window I entered the room almost as easily as it could have been entered by the door.

The room was very long and narrow, and the ceiling sloped so much to one side as to almost meet the floor. At one end stood the old man's bedstead; and all the rest of the available space, except only a narrow way which led from the door to the bed, was literally crammed with boxes and packages of every shape and size. I remembered now that when the Hall was being renovated this room, by the special request of Adams, had been suffered to go untouched. I had not expected to come to such a large storehouse of miscellaneous property, and was at a loss what to examine first. After a casual glance round, my eyes lighted upon a strange-looking chest, painted a dull red, with some nearly obliterated Oriental characters in gold upon the lid, and that chest I determined to open.

That this chest had belonged to my ancestor Roger, I had not the smallest doubt; and my belief was confirmed when, after cutting the cords with which it was bound, I removed the lid and took out from it a Turkish robe, elegantly embroidered with gold, the colour as fresh as on the day it was made. As I held this garment up to examine it, there fell from out of its folds a fez, ornamented with a gold crescent and three diamond stars, and an aigrette composed of various magnificent stones and birds of paradise feathers, the latter for the most part broken and crushed.

I was now in such a frenzy of excitement as to be almost incapacitated for continuing my search. Was all the property in this thief's den stolen from us? and if so, was it all as valuable as this? In my eagerness I turned the chest upside down that I might the quicker acquaint myself with its contents, which I found to consist of two other robes similar to the first but of different pattern, several more diamond stars, and five daggers of various sizes, all of them with richly jewelled handles.



Having replaced the things in the chest as carefully as my agitated state would allow me, I sat down on the edge of the bed and wiped the perspiration from my forehead. What should I examine next? I had already abundant power to compel Adams to restore the sequins and whatever else he had stolen from us under threat of an immediate prosecution. Why, my object was already half accomplished. My father would now have to abandon his scepticism; the wrong uncle Sam had done the Wolseys would be balanced by the wrong my father and Mr Wolsey had done uncle Sam; we should all be rich together; enmity would cease among us and everything henceforth go as merrily as the marriage bell which my Connie and I would cause to ring.

No, I would not look any further now. When my father returned this room should be emptied, and everything in it thoroughly examined. Meanwhile I would take with me the aigrette, stars, and daggers; would close the window, and nail the door up on the outside.

Having carefully executed these arrangements, I replaced the ladder where I had found it, and went again into the kitchen, where I left instructions that old John was to be sent to me in the parlour the moment he returned, and that nothing was to be said to him about my having been into his bedroom.

And then, with feelings similar to those which I suppose must animate a victorious general after a battle, I paced round and round our garden hour after hour, and consumed many cigarettes, waiting for the return of Adams, which I hoped might be before my father and Mr Wolsey came home.

After what appeared an interminable time a maid came out to inform me that Adams had returned, and was awaiting me in the parlour, and thither I at once went.

The old man was standing just inside the door, holding his hat in one hand and a letter in the other. I took the letter from him and opened it, but finding that it was long put it into my pocket for the present without reading it.



"John, how long have you been a servant here?" I asked.

The old man looked up wonderingly, and after a brief pause replied—

"Nigh on forty-six year. Your grandfather was just married when I come, and your father wasn't born till eighteen months after."

"And though you have been well treated and cared for all those years, you must needs rob your benefactors of everything valuable you can lay your hands on. Look at these things which I have just recovered from your room," I exclaimed, throwing the aigrette, the stars, and the daggers on the table. "And tell me, you lying thief, what you have done with those gold coins you stole out of the crypt, or by the God that made me, I'll bind you hand and foot and cart you off to Ixworth;" and with these words I sprang at the old man, and seizing him by the throat, forced him against the wall, where I held him as in a vice, surprised at my own strength.



## XXV.

### DEATH.

Dark mystery, unsolved, unsolvable !  
Thy visitation awes the good and brave,  
And forces e'en the sceptic to confess  
The Hidden Power.

THE old man offered no resistance to my violence, nor did he utter a word. A ghastly paleness overspread his face, his head fell a little to one side, and he looked as if he would have fallen but for the support I afforded him. His apparent collapse under the sudden attack which had been made upon him excited my sympathy, and in less than a minute I relaxed my grasp, saying—

“Tell me where you have put those coins, and not only shall you escape punishment, but you shall be rewarded and allowed to remain here as long as you live.”

The old man made no reply, but leaned against the wall, breathing heavily, with a strange expression on his face, the like of which I had not seen.

Again I approached him, and laying my hand gently on his shoulder spoke to him kindly, yet earnestly—

“I am sorry I have frightened you. As I live, I promise you shall come to no harm. But please tell me what you have done with those coins, for I have a right to know.”

With a great effort, pitiable for its feebleness, the old man took a large iron key from his pocket, and essayed to step towards me, making as though he would speak; but he failed of his intention and fell heavily on the floor.



The incident seriously alarmed me. In an instant I was on my knees at his side, supporting his head on my arm. But my utmost efforts failed to rouse the old man; his attenuated form waxed heavier and heavier, and his half-closed eyes and compressed lips lent an expression to his face awful to behold. Quite terrified at his condition, I stamped violently upon the floor and shouted so loudly for help that two servants rushed into the room.

"Fetch Dr Thurlow at once; if he isn't in, send the boy on a horse to Ixworth for a doctor. Adams is ill—I don't know how seriously. And bring some water, one of you, quickly!"

The women hastily left to obey my orders, and were met at the door by my father and Mr Wolsey.

"What is the matter?" asked my father, stooping to look at the old man as he lay on the floor. "What has happened?"

"I was talking to Adams when he suddenly reeled and fell down unconscious," I explained.

"He would be better on the couch," said Mr Wolsey; and adopting the suggestion, we lifted the old man into that position.

By this time a servant had returned with some water; and while I bathed the face of the patient, Mr Wolsey and my father felt his left side and watched intently for signs of respiration, which could with difficulty be discerned.

"I am afraid he is going," said my father quietly.

Mr Wolsey, to whom these ominous words were addressed, signified his assent by slightly inclining his head.

"O no!" I cried in an agony of fear, oppressed with the consciousness of how largely I was responsible for this catastrophe; "five minutes ago he was well. He must surely revive soon."

My exclamation was interrupted by the entry of Dr Thurlow, who at once began a systematic examination of the patient. He felt the old man's pulse and the region of his heart, closed and unclosed his passive hands, lifted one of his eyelids and placed his finger on the eye—an experiment which I could not



help but witness, though it horrified me profoundly. These things accomplished, Dr Thurlow turned to my father and said—

“I am sorry to tell you, Mr Truman, that your old servant is dead.”

My heart sank within me as I realised the meaning of the doctor's words. This was my first experience of death; and in presence of that awful mystery I seemed to grow older by as many years as minutes had elapsed since the fatal accusation. I could not speak, but stood, in a sort of stupor, looking down upon what had so recently been instinct with warmth and motion. All thought of the sequins was banished from my mind, and instead I could think only of the one who had taught me to ride in the green lanes about Holdenhurst when I was a child; who had been first to impress upon me the names of the trees, shrubs, flowers, and birds common in our neighbourhood; and who, so far as I could remember, had never spoken harshly to me. And now that one lay before me dead, he who but for me would doubtless still be performing his customary duties about the place. My reflections were too painful to bear undisturbed, and I broke down utterly.

Dr Thurlow was about to lead me from the room when he saw the Turkish daggers which lay on the table.

“What are these?” he asked, picking up the weapons. “Has the man died from an injury which has escaped my notice?” and he turned again towards the couch.

“No, no,” I explained; “they have not been unsheathed for years. Look; you will find it so.”

“Yes,” assented Dr Thurlow, who nevertheless thought it proper to satisfy himself of the truth of my statement by making a careful examination of the daggers.

“Of what has the old man died?” These were the first words my father uttered after he had been told that his old servant was dead, and his voice was tremulous with suppressed emotion.

“I can't say until I have investigated the case more



particularly," replied Dr Thurlow ; " but appearances seem to indicate syncope. His heart has been weak for a long time, and it is not an unnatural termination for him ; but at the same time I should not have expected it unless precipitated by some sudden excitement or passion."

While Dr Thurlow was speaking, Mr Wolsey opened the door, and revealed our servants standing in a group just without. He informed them of the melancholy event which had occurred within, and they returned sorrowfully to the kitchen, whispering together as they went ; while Mr Wolsey, my father and I, and Dr Thurlow, crossed the hall to the dining-room, the latter carrying the Turkish daggers and aigrette which he had taken from the table, and a large rusted iron key which he had found on the floor close to where Adams had fallen.



## XXVI.

### HOMELESS.

Filial ties are strong and fast,  
And last when infant days are past—  
Unless, opposing nature's course,  
They fail before that greater force  
Which draws together youthful hearts,  
And love and joy and hope imparts.

“No, Ernest, I am not hard upon you ; my fault lies on the other side. I have been weak, and am justly punished for my weakness ; but I am not too old to reform. Henceforward I will rule in my own house ; and anyone, not excepting even yourself, who is indisposed to submit to that rule, may betake himself elsewhere. Consider well my words ; they are not lightly spoken.”

“I protest that my conduct towards you has never been anything but that of an affectionate son. Why has all this trouble fallen upon me ? Because I have sought to make peace between you and your brother. Was that a bad task to set myself ? I have always believed, and do now believe more strongly than ever, that your brother had no hand in the robbery of the sequins.”

My father smiled faintly, and remarked in a somewhat sarcastic tone that he doubted whether I should have assumed the Christian part of peacemaker so earnestly in this case if it had not also been the way to a closer acquaintance with Miss Marsh. His words aroused the slumbering anger within me, and I replied to them with more warmth than discretion—



"What you say is very true. When inclination and duty point the same way, the duty is well performed."

"That has hardly been so in this case," said my father.

"My purpose was defeated by a natural though unexpected event ; and I am no **more** responsible for the death of the old man we followed to the grave yesterday than I am responsible for the death of Charles the First. Dr Thurlow has told you that Adams' heart was weak, and that it was a miracle he lived so long as he did. It was my ill fate to be the one to accuse him of his crime. Uncle Sam's advice was sound."

"Very sound !" echoed my father bitterly. "And nearly all the property found in the old man's room, including the red Turkish chest, was placed there with my consent when all the rest of the house was being overhauled by your uncle's workmen !"

"How about the key which Adams was about to give me the moment before his final seizure ?"

"Ay, how about it ? Have you not spent two days ineffectually trying to fit it to every lock within these walls ? Ernest, you have entirely exhausted my patience. I must absolutely decline to discuss with you again the robbery of the sequins ; and I repeat, for the last time, my determination. You may remain here as long as you will, and all I have is yours, provided that you cease to correspond with my brother, his wife, and Miss Marsh. Unless you are prepared to adopt that course, you must no longer consider this your home. I dare say it pains you to be told this so bluntly ; but you must reflect that a man does not talk in this way to his only son without pain to himself, and surely never without great cause. *I*, at least, do not."

And with pale face, compressed lips, and a strange light in his eyes, my father passed out of the room.

For a few moments I stood still, dazed by the importance of the decision I had so unexpectedly been called upon to make. I never for a moment doubted that I was very ill-used ; on the contrary, I considered myself most unjustly punished. Ever



since my uncle was at Holdenhurst my policy had been directed with a view to effect his reconciliation to my father and the winning of Constance Marsh for myself; and such desires, I conceived, were commendable and natural in any one circumstanced as I was. The terms imposed by my father as the price of his continued friendship and protection were too exacting for me to entertain. Deeply as it grieved me to finally quit that sequestered spot where I was born, whose every nook recalled some pleasant incident of my childhood's happy days when my father had watched over me with a tender and anxious solicitude such as a man only bestows on a motherless child, I was prepared to abandon it at once and for ever rather than renounce the dear girl whose love I had won. It was hard to leave my home and live estranged from my lifelong companion and friend, the one to whom I owed everything; but even that, hard as it was, would be easier than the alternative offered to me. These considerations brought tears to my eyes, but my purpose was never for a moment weakened. Suddenly I roused myself from the reverie into which I had fallen, and turning to go to my own room encountered Mr Wolsey at the door.

"What is all this trouble between you and your father, Ernest?" asked the old gentleman.

"You had better inquire for the particulars where you learned the fact," I answered testily; for I could not help thinking that Mr Wolsey was in some measure responsible for the present resolute attitude of my father; that he had been exerting his influence to annul the friendship which he knew existed between my uncle and me. Without waiting to hear any further remark from him, I passed my interrogator abruptly and continued my way to my room.

No sooner was I in assured solitude than I sat down, and resting my aching head on my hands, endeavoured to impartially review the whole course of my life, which consisted, I found, of two periods—nearly twenty years of happy, careless indifference, and six months of high hopes, grave anxieties,



and bitter disappointments, the division being marked by my introduction to uncle Sam. The shorter of the two periods seemed the longer, the flight of time being appreciated for the importance rather than the number of its events. For two hours did I wrestle with myself and suffer indescribable anguish of spirit, vainly desiring the light and guidance which I knew not where nor how to seek. The purest, most loving, most disinterested, most generous being I had ever known was Constance Marsh, and to her would I go to claim the promise she had made to become my wife. Would that I had accepted her advice, and abandoned all hope or thought of the cursed sequins! But the mischief was past and irreparable, and I could only resolve that never again—no, not even though the clearest conceivable indications of success were placed before me—would I so much as lift my hand for the recovery of a treasure the very name of which must ever after be associated in my mind with misery.

My resolution was taken: I would certainly leave home. Indeed, there was nothing else for me to do, my father's terms being precise, and such as I could not bring myself to accept; yet did I love my father as well as I had ever done, and the thought that I was now going away from Holdenhurst, perhaps never to return—that possibly I had looked upon my father's face for the last time—cut me to the heart. I sat down at a table and wrote upon a sheet of paper, which I could only dimly see, a few lines addressed to my father, regretting that my conduct during the past few months had been such as he could not approve, especially as that conduct had been based upon a sincere belief in its righteousness, a belief which I still entertained; and therefore, by his own ruling, Holdenhurst was no longer my home. I closed with many endearing expressions, not forgetting to state that should he ever desire to see me, it would be my pleasure no less than my duty to come to him.

My painful task completed, I folded the note, and rose to pack a handbag. As I did so the looking-glass revealed my



face and startled me, so pallid and haggard had I become. I observed my appearance for but a moment, and then hurried forward my scanty preparations for departure. Yet a few minutes later, and I had left the house with no more than I could conveniently carry, coming away unobserved through a door which led from the garden into an orchard, and thence along a footpath which served us as a convenient short cut into the Bury road.

It was early morning, and the autumnal mist which obscured the fields was slowly disappearing before the rising sun. When I reached the bend of the road I turned to take a last look at my old home, but it was enveloped in the mist and could not be seen. Resuming my journey at a great pace, I endeavoured by rapid walking and clear thinking to emerge from the mental depression which had resulted, as I did not even then doubt, from my errors of judgment no less than my peculiar circumstances. Clear thinking! Alas! that was a power which had never been mine; and it seemed there was no way for me to attain it but through the cruel discipline afforded by a succession of blunders and consequent disaster.

As I progressed along the lonely road, I mercilessly dissected and criticised my past conduct, resolving with all the strength of will I could exert to be henceforth more sceptical in all things, more deliberate in action, and more secretive. The voluntary and generous declaration of Constance Marsh absolved me, I thought, from my former cherished resolve not to marry unless my resources were at least as great as those of my wife; and I would therefore at once return to America, claim the hand and heart I had won, and while endeavouring in all things to gratify my youthful wife, devote a large part of my time and means to some work for the general good. Reconciliation with my father could not fail to come about after the lapse of a little time; and as friendship is no less contagious than enmity, might it not reasonably be hoped that the peacemaking would be yet further extended?

In this mood I arrived at Bury St Edmund's, and having



walked up Abbeygate Street, turned aside into the Butter Market, and entered an inn there, where not many minutes afterwards I was sitting in a private room at a table spread with writing materials.

The letter which poor old Adams had brought from Chevington on the day of his death had not yet been acknowledged. It was an inquiry by Mrs Butterwell for the address of the Rev. Mr Evan Price. "That gentleman," wrote Mrs Butterwell, "I once or twice had the pleasure to hear preach in the little church at Holdenhurst Minor, and his manners impressed me as everything that was right and proper in a clergyman—such charming elucidations of Scriptural difficulties! such admirable discrimination in his bearing towards proprietors, tenants, and peasantry! I have long intended to benefit this very deserving young man as soon as the opportunity to do so should arise, and the living of Kingsthorpe being vacant just now in consequence of the death of the Rev. Mr Obadiah Hornblower (poor dear man, he was only seventy-two, and till this year was never troubled with bronchitis in summer!) I have decided to offer it to Mr Price. The living of Kingsthorpe is worth nominally £1200 a year, but owing to the badness of the times the income is now not much over £800. It is a great depreciation, of course; but in these days the living is still regarded as a good one, and I have received hundreds of letters from unbeneficed clergymen begging for the preferment, some of them written as soon as it became known that Mr Hornblower was not likely to recover. Do pray oblige me with Mr Price's present address, for I shall not offer the living to any one else until he has rejected it."

As I pondered over Mrs Butterwell's letter, the bitter things—bitter chiefly because they were true—which Mr Price had said of the Truman family when conversing with Constance Marsh at Tarrytown, were vividly reproduced by my memory; and I thought, too, how persistently he had continued his suit after he had plainly perceived that I was preferred to him.



Though I could not entertain these recollections without some bitterness, and in a foolish moment was half tempted to withhold all knowledge of the coveted preferment from my rival, my better self prevailed. No ; I would not inaugurate my new course of conduct with a splenetic freak ; I should be forgiving and charitable, and would write a friendly though brief note to Mr Price, enclosing therewith Mrs Butterwell's letter. This done, I wrote another note informing Mrs Butterwell of my action in the matter.

And now I had to communicate with uncle Sam. What should I say to him ? Of the failure, or worse than failure, of the course he had advised, he knew at present nothing. For a long while I paused, and stared vacantly upon a blank sheet of paper with my pen grasped ready to record my thoughts ; but, alas ! those thoughts were too painful and too chaotic for me to give them coherent expression, so after much waste of time I contented myself with inditing two telegrams. One was to my uncle, and merely stated that my mission had failed, and I was on my way to New York ; the other, addressed to Miss Marsh, ran thus : " My own ! No treasure but you. Returning to claim your promise. Your loving Ernest."



## XXVII.

### AT THE WINDSOR HOTEL, NEW YORK.

*Maiden.*—Thy words are fair, but not more fair than false. Go thy ways ; I believe thee not.

*Knight.*—And what though my words be false as thou sayest ?  
I am but like my kind.

*Maiden.*—Alas, that is so. I too will be like my kind and forgive thee.

ON a certain Sunday evening in the month of October the good steamship *Campania* was made fast in her berth at the Cunard Company's quay in New York City, and the delighted passengers, hastily abandoning the floating palace which had so quickly and luxuriously transported them from the old to the new world, hurried hither and thither, greeting the friends who awaited them, inquiring after luggage, or hailing hackney carriages. One passenger, however, quickly made his way through the eager throng ; and as he had no other *impedimenta* than a small handbag, and was oblivious of the bawling of the expressmen, he was the first whom the Customs officials permitted to pass into the street.

The weather was superb, the season being what some Americans call their "Indian summer," and others the "fall," though the latter term is generally understood to include a somewhat longer period than the former. The excessive heat of summer had passed away, but its brilliance remained, and there was a delightful coolness in the air. The foliage had put on a golden tint of extreme beauty, the sky was cloudless, and all external conditions of a sort to exhilarate



humanity. But the gloom which had taken possession of me when I embarked at Liverpool had steadily increased during the voyage, and at times I had hardly been able to endure my own communings. After the exhaustive consideration of my position and prospects engendered by eight days of self-sought isolation in my cabin, the vista before me did not appear nearly so rosy as I had at first pictured it. Thoughts of the death of Adams now tormented me more than was the case immediately after that tragic event. Though I could not in justice reproach myself with having killed the old man, and was comforted by the positive evidence of Dr Thurlow to that effect, yet I well knew that at best my act had hastened the old man's decease, and who could say by how much? As I reflected how delicate was the distinction between my act and manslaughter, I suffered pangs of remorse. Consideration, too, of my other affairs was not calculated to afford me much relief. Here was a young Englishman with little or no experience of the world, homeless, heir to a small impoverished estate which he would probably not inherit for thirty years, owner of two hundred pounds and a handbag, come to New York to marry a young lady worth millions of dollars! Why, the idea seemed too preposterous for anyone but a dreamer to entertain. But the die was cast, and the course entered upon must be persevered in to the end. Had it been possible for me to live my days over again, I should probably have made other and equally disastrous errors.

Though it was Sunday, and the great stores were closed, Broadway was thronged with well-dressed, prosperous-looking people, not much unlike such as one sees in the principal thoroughfares of European capitals, except that among them was a goodly number of Negroes and Chinamen. After a long sea voyage a walk is essential to most people for adjusting the physical equilibrium which has been so rudely disturbed. I found it so; and grasping my bag, bent my steps up town as I had done on the occasion of my first coming to New York. Not long afterwards I paused before my uncle's house, and



was struck with consternation when I observed that the blinds were all drawn down and the shutters closed.

Sounds of much unbolting and unbarring reached me before the door was opened in response to my summons, and then I was informed by a man-servant, whose face I remembered, that Mr Truman was staying at the Windsor Hotel, and had left word that he would like me to call upon him there.

"Are Mrs Truman and Miss Marsh with him?" I inquired, greatly surprised at this intelligence.

"I believe not," replied the man, looking aside in a strange way that discouraged further questioning. However, I inquired of him the whereabouts of the Windsor Hotel, and being informed that it was close at hand on Fifth Avenue, I went there as quickly as I could, more perturbed than ever. When I presented my card to the clerk who had charge of the entrance hall of that colossal hotel, he at once deputed a waiter to conduct me to my uncle's apartments, at the same time telling me that Mr Truman had remained indoors the whole of yesterday in expectation of my arrival.

"Ah!" exclaimed uncle Sam, as he laid his cigar on the mantelpiece and advanced to meet me, "you are the man I need! I received your cablegram, and would have replied to it had it been possible; but you were already on the water. I perceive you are well, so lose no time in telling me as briefly as you can about those infernal sequins, for I am in haste to tell you something of infinitely greater importance."

My uncle's manner alarmed me. He seemed to be labouring under suppressed excitement, and as he resumed his cigar and walked up and down the large room, his whole aspect impressed me as strangely different from the self-possessed, confident man who had excited my boyish wonder. Could it be that the enormous resources of this able financier had at last been broken by a combination for that purpose such as one not unfrequently hears of in the country of his adoption? I could not conceal my fear, and gave timid expression to it.

"No, no," said uncle Sam impatiently, as a forced smile



overspread his features ; "nothing of the kind. Get on with your story."

To hear was to obey. At no time was uncle Sam a man to trifle with, and least of all at the present moment. When I had completed my account of my mission to England, he paused in front of me (for during my recital he had not once ceased to pace the room), and throwing away the end of his cigar, said :

"It is as I supposed. Though you are probably now farther off than ever from recovery of the sequins, and the result of your expense and trouble is merely the addition of another inhabitant to the devil's dominions, I have as little doubt as ever that the old man had the gold, and that he has bestowed it where it will rest until it is discovered by some other thief. And now please oblige me by never mentioning this matter to me again, for I do assure you I am most heartily sick of it."

My uncle took two cigars from his pocket. One of them he threw to me across the table ; and having lit the other, he again paced the room. A minute or two elapsed before he spoke. When at last he did so, it was with intense bitterness.

"Of all that you have done or failed to do, that which vexes me most is your forwarding Mrs Butterwell's letter to Price. But I don't blame you in any way ; it was impossible that you could know of the deep hatred I was so soon to bear to that unspeakable humbug. The fault is my own for having, in the exercise of my natural generosity, foolishly suffered myself to befriend one of his canting, hypocritical caste. When I picked that unconscionable beggar out of the Suffolk mud, he was not ten cents ahead of his debts, and the utmost racking of his wits produced him an income about one-fifth as much as I pay my cook."

Uncle Sam paused for a moment, puffed forth a cloud of smoke in a way suggestive of ineffable contempt, and resumed :

"As you know, I brought him here and gave him the management of a newspaper I own, paying him largely for his



inefficient discharge of duties which I had to teach him. He attached himself to Connie, and did his best to win her ; but Connie, with prudence worthy of her father, would have none of him. When you appeared upon the scene, and gained almost without effort the prize for which he had contended in vain, he made the girl for whom he used to profess the most extravagant regard the victim of his revenge. His inability to injure her without injuring Mrs Truman and me in a greater degree did not deter the villain. His method was this. Knowing that Constance was devoted to her sister, and that anything which would trouble one must needs disquiet the other, he showed her (in your presence, I understand) a letter he had received from another pestilent Suffolk parson, exposing my relations with Annie Wolsey—the writer, a craven-hearted windbag named Fuller, having got his information from old Wolsey or your father. Connie, wiser than most women, kept her knowledge to herself ; and Price, suspecting this from the fact that there was no upset in my house, forwarded Fuller's letter to my wife."

The malicious leer upon Mr Price's face at the moment when I last looked upon him was pictured in my memory and not likely to be forgotten. That it was the outward and visible sign of a diabolical nature I had never doubted, and his strictures upon my family on that occasion helped to confirm the opinion ; but none the less was I astonished to learn in what circuitous ways this man had worked to injure people who, so far from giving him any cause for enmity, had done much to earn his gratitude. As my uncle again paused, I ventured to congratulate him on the futility of Mr Price's act, seeing that Mr Fuller's letter contained nothing which aunt Gertrude did not already know.

"My affairs are hardly so smooth as that," continued uncle Sam, forgetful of, or diplomatically ignoring, a previous declaration he had made. "My wife has left me, and I cannot induce her to return home except by substantial assurances that I have finally ceased to correspond with Annie Wolsey."



"Good Heavens!" I exclaimed in great affright. "Do you know where she has gone? Is Constance with her?"

"Don't talk so loud. I am not deaf, and there is no necessity for informing everybody; the affair is sufficiently known already. *You* have no cause for alarm. I shall give my wife the assurances she demands, and in a day or two at farthest she will reassume her rightful position. At the same time I humbly confess that it does touch me to the quick that I should find it expedient to alter my way of life because of the machinations of that ungrateful vagabond. It is a pity you forwarded that old lady's letter to him."

"Where is my aunt and Connie?" I asked bluntly.

"In Orange, at a house where their father used to live."

"Is that far from here?"

"Only a few miles. Orange is in New Jersey, the other side of the North River."

A sigh of relief escaped me when I heard these words. To know that I was so near to my dear Constance was as one faint streak of light in a dark sky. I lit the cigar which I had been nervously twirling between my fingers during the progress of this conversation, and took a seat by the open window. Uncle Sam, too, became somewhat calmer, and seated himself opposite to me. A long pause ensued, which was at last broken by uncle Sam suddenly breaking out into a loud laugh, quite in his old style. I looked up at him in surprise.

"To think," said he, as if in answer to the wonder depicted on my countenance, "that a large class of people should specially reverence such professors! But I suppose if it were not for the lowness of the average intelligence, even the few couldn't live well. 'Reverend,' forsooth!"

"I fear I don't quite understand you, uncle."

"That fellow Price," continued uncle Sam, not noticing my interruption, "was specially trained to uphold and disseminate all virtuous principles as well by example as precept. In the way of precept, I should think he has performed his part; but I never had the misfortune to hear him in circumstances where



I was not privileged to reply. As for his example—well, he is hypocrisy, cowardice, meanness, and ingratitude personified. How is it that in these days of universal education and cheap journals such multitudes of people persist in investing his kind with attributes which belong to the creed, and but rarely to the teachers? Is there anyone living who doesn't know that professors of religion have been guilty of every crime known to the law in the same proportion to their numbers as the professors of medicine, arms, or what else you will? Does a moneylender exact less substantial guarantees from an ecclesiastical client than from a military client? That these things are as they are don't surprise me in the least. What I marvel at is the widespread delusion to the contrary. The delusion, I think, is not quite so prevalent here as in England, and it does not exist unchallenged even in the old country. I remember reading a few lines by a wisely anonymous poet which run something like this :—

O Englishmen, when will you wake,  
And off your horrid thralldom shake,  
For Chadband and for Stiggins make  
A good strong cage?  
With hypocrites your islands teem,  
And Cant and Humbug reign supreme,  
For men are rarely what they seem  
In this late age.

But there, the rhymester might have spared his ink! As well try to dispel a London fog with a squib."

Though my religious training had been so meagre that it hardly deserves to be recorded, consisting as it did of the devotional exercises enforced at school and a tolerably regular attendance at Holdenhurst Major church—where I used to combat somnolence by making anagrams out of the inscriptions on the memorial tablets adorning the opposite wall, while Mr Fuller delivered himself of his long, vapid, and inconsequent sermons—and no article of faith was ever insisted on, or even



discussed, in my home; notwithstanding this training, I was shocked and pained by the levity with which my uncle rated a class of men I had, as a body, always greatly respected. But I was no match for him in argument; and besides, if I had been, this was an inopportune moment in which to cross him. I chose rather to turn the conversation by asking my uncle if he had in any way notified Mr Price of his displeasure.

"What do you think?" asked uncle Sam in a contemptuous tone, as if he regarded the question as absurdly unnecessary. "Had him promptly thrown out of the *Investors' Guide* office; am pressing him by the quickest methods for repayment of money advanced; moved Rosenberg to do ditto in respect of the value of a diamond the Jew was fool enough to let him have on credit; and have the reverend gentleman under surveillance of two of Pinkerton's smartest detectives, so that should he attempt to leave the State before he has given full satisfaction for the claims upon him, he will be instantly laid by the heels."

"Where is Mr Price now?" I inquired.

"Staying at a boarding-house somewhere up town. Pinkerton's people will inform me to-morrow whether he is likely to square accounts or not. I am sure I sincerely hope he may be unable to do so; for in that case I may perhaps succeed in fixing him here long enough to spoil him of that fat cure of souls your neighbour has offered him. By-the-by, how long is a parish of souls suffered to go uncured? I mean, how long can the old lady keep the job open for Price?"

I confessed my complete ignorance of the subject.

"What a fine item of news for some of your English Church papers could be conveyed in these words: 'The services at Kingsthorpe Church will be conducted during the next six months by the Rev. Mr Somebody, pending the arrival of the Rev. Mr Evan Price, the new incumbent, at present incarcerated in the Penitentiary at Blackwell's Island, New York, as a fraudulent debtor.'"

I did not join in the laugh with which uncle Sam greeted his



own thoughts, but rose as if about to leave, though with no fixed intention. The unexpected aspect of affairs in New York had greatly disconcerted me, and seriously deranged my plans. Uncle Sam perceived my disquietude and irresolution, and (somewhat unnecessarily, I thought) inquired the cause of it.

"I shall be very anxious until I have seen Constance," was the only explanation I could offer.

"Until you die, you mean," corrected uncle Sam. "At present it seems to you that when you possess your dear Connie and her dollars there will be no desire in your nature left ungratified. My dear sir, don't abuse your intelligence by believing any such nonsense; and pray don't contradict me, for I know more about you than you know about yourself. The only way to escape anxiety is to avoid knowledge, for that is the poison of which it is made. Take a Suffolk agricultural labourer, who has never been ten miles from the hovel in which he was born; he is generally the father of ten children, and his weekly income is rarely more than ten shillings, and that he has to earn with his muscles. Is he anxious? Devil a bit! He whistles and sings, or rather he makes strange noises which he believes to be such, which is quite as good; for, as we have just seen, faith is a very useful thing. Contentment is compatible only with illiteracy and isolation. Now look on the other side of the picture. I have a wife not much older than your young lady, quite as beautiful as she, and the possessor of precisely as many dollars, while as for myself, there are not more than seven men in this great country whose means exceed mine. But I can't escape anxiety. On the contrary, I have had rather large doses of it the last few days."

"But you would have avoided your anxieties if——"

"——If I had not done the things which have incurred them. Precisely. But there are matters of which no man ever estimates the consequence, and when those matters go smoothly he must always refer the gratifying result to his luck, and never to his judgment."



"I hope you have no objection to my calling upon my aunt and Miss Marsh to-morrow?"

"Not the least in the world, and you can take to your aunt a special message from me. I have actually accomplished that which she insisted upon; and now, according to her own terms, she is willing to return to me. To-morrow, or next day at furthest, I shall be in a position to offer you the use of my house. Meantime, you can't do better than remain here with me."

Supper was now announced, and my uncle accompanied me to the private room where it awaited us; but he would not eat anything, preferring to smoke another cigar and chat to me while I partook of some much-needed refreshment.



## XXVIII.

### MISTRESS AND WIFE.

As tender vines cling to a tower,  
And wreath its old grey stones with beauty;  
So women cling to manly power,  
And render to it love and duty.

It was past ten o'clock when I awoke the next morning. The greater part of the night had been spent in a fruitless endeavour to compose myself to sleep; and when, after many weary hours, I at last lost consciousness of external objects, I had not even then escaped the sense of oppression; so that when I arose in haste, surprised at the lateness of the hour, it was with none of those delightful sensations of refreshed vitality which commonly attend the awakening of healthful youth. But the thought that I was this day to see Constance Marsh acted as a stimulus to my feeble will, and I dressed myself with much care, though hastily. Needless to relate, my uncle was up before me and had already breakfasted. I found him standing by a window in the room where he had received me on the previous day, thoughtfully twirling a cheque around his fingers. An opened letter lay upon the table.

After the usual brief salutations my uncle bade me go to breakfast without loss of time, a command I was not slow to obey, as he informed me that he was in receipt of an unsatisfactory communication the nature of which he would explain on my return.

When I re-entered the room about fifteen minutes later, my uncle was standing in the place where I had left him, his



hands clasped behind, and staring vacantly at the carriages as they swiftly passed up the avenue towards Central Park. I was much impressed by the evident change which had been wrought in this extraordinary man in but a few short weeks. Two days ago, and I could not have conceived any circumstances that would have induced Samuel Truman to remain quiet and pensive for so long as a quarter of an hour.

"Ah!" exclaimed uncle Sam, suddenly turning upon me in his old energetic way; "read that letter, Ernest, and tell me what you think of it."

I examined the contents of the envelope to which my uncle pointed, and found they consisted of a cheque on Drexel's Bank for four thousand two hundred dollars, drawn by Evan Price in favour of my uncle, accompanied by a few polite words from that gentleman, stating that he forwarded the said cheque in satisfaction of all claims, and awaited a receipt for the same.

"Well," I said, as I replaced the letter and cheque in their envelope, "I think you are to be congratulated. Mr Price can't do you any further harm, and you have recovered your money."

"That's true," admitted uncle Sam; "but I'm baulked of my revenge—for the present. No matter; all things come to those who wait if they be furnished with watchful eyes. Meanwhile it is pleasant to contemplate the awful vacuity of that humbug's purse now that he has disgorged those few dollars."

"Perhaps he has borrowed the money to pay you," I suggested.

"I don't think anybody would lend him so much now he has no connection with the *Investors' Guide*; but I may ascertain that later on. I have sent him a receipt, and the cheque I will give to you. It is an open cheque, and when I have endorsed it you can cash it at Drexel's, in Wall Street, which is quite close to my office."

I was about to thank my uncle for his generous gift; but he would not listen to me, and went on to say that he was in



momentary expectation of the arrival of Mrs Truman ; that she had promised to come to him at the Windsor Hotel and to return with him to their house in Thirty-fourth Street. "Connie," he added, as he consulted his watch, "is at Orange ; and if you start for that place within an hour and bring her on at once to New York you will find on your return your aunt and me in our proper places, and all things fixed comfortably."

This was delightful information, infinitely more pleasing to me than the possession of the cheque which I had just placed in my wallet. Uncle Sam noticed my satisfaction and remarked upon it, bidding me never to needlessly complicate my affairs, for that way lies Perplexity, handmaid to Madness, but always to prefer simple courses, and then small things would never lose their power to please. Having expressed himself thus, he reclined upon a settee with his feet superposed on the back of a chair, and lit his first cigar for that day.

"I suppose I shall experience no difficulty in finding Belle Vue Cottage when I arrive at Orange."

"Not the least in the world," said uncle Sam ; "everybody in Orange knows it."

"Then I will start at once."

"No, don't go till your aunt comes ; she can't surely be many minutes," said uncle Sam, consulting his watch for the twentieth time in an hour. "Ah ! here she comes," he exclaimed, as the door slowly opened and my aunt entered the room.

Yes, it was my aunt who entered ; but not my uncle's wife, the gentle lady Gertrude. No ; it was my mother's only surviving sister, the companion of my childhood, the woman who had caused the unhappy family division of which I had so recently learned. It was Annie Wolsey.

"Why have you come here ?" asked uncle Sam in a husky voice, suddenly springing to his feet.

Annie Wolsey closed the door as deliberately as she had opened it, and leaned her back against it—perhaps for the



support it afforded, for she was ghastly pale, and seemed unable to close her colourless lips to give utterance to her thoughts.

"Why have you come here?" asked uncle Sam again. "You have received my letter?"

"Yes, I have received your letter," said the agitated woman, after a painful pause, "and I will not believe its statements in that form. With those lips with which you have so often expressed your love for me must you tell me that you have no wish to see me again, or I can never, never believe it."

"Annie," said uncle Sam sternly, yet with a slight tremor in his voice, "what I have said to you in my letter is true, every word, and must be acted upon. It is entirely your own fault that it is so. Had you but followed my simple advice, this had never happened. How many times have I warned you of the probable outcome of your communications with your father! The result is only such as I feared and foresaw. Now you have regained your father, and your father has put it out of my power to be to you what once I was; but my protection is still yours, and in whatever part of the world you may choose to live you shall always be provided with large means, secured to you and your son."

"Ah, *my* son! but not more my son than yours. You mean *our* son. O Sam, surely this is not to be the end of our—our friendship? My son is your only child; it follows then that I am more really your wife than she whom the world recognises as such. Oh, don't forsake me; defy the world's opinion in this as you have defied it in so many other ways. Consider your great wealth and the independence it confers; what censure you cannot afford to ignore, you can stifle with your gold. Don't forsake me, Sam. I have been faithful to you; I swear it, by whatever you most believe or hope for."

The speaker's face was flushed now; and having found her voice, she spoke rapidly, but in a plaintive, pleading tone that was painful to hear. In the tall, graceful woman standing before me I could with difficulty recognise the Suffolk village girl who but a few years before had been my almost constant



companion, so changed was she. But her face and figure were none the less familiar to me, though for another and very different reason. When Annie Wolsey first entered the room I had started involuntarily, so great was her resemblance to the portrait of my mother which hung in the drawing-room at Holdenhurst Hall. I would at once have withdrawn, as having neither the right nor desire to be present at such a conference, but that Annie stood against the closed door, and my presence embarrassed the disputants so little that neither of them took the least notice of me.

Annie Wolsey's passionate appeal visibly disconcerted uncle Sam ; and when she opened and extended towards him a large locket that depended from a chain around her neck, displaying a portrait of an infant face with large laughing eyes and curly locks, he averted his face for a few moments to gather strength to reply.

"Annie," said uncle Sam, advancing towards her and taking her hand in his, "it is not permitted to any one, man or woman, to entirely defy the proprieties upheld by the saintly few and the hypocritical many. You forget, or you fail to realise, that just such people as you and I will be in as great or even greater haste to condemn us as those who, whether from accident or design, have kept to the straight path. So long as our relations remained unknown, all was well. By your own indiscretion they have become known—and we must part, as I have always told you we should have to do in that case. I don't think my regret is less intense than yours, and this is not the least part of it ;" gently closing the locket, on which he had been gazing with a wistful expression—"but what I have written I have written, and come what may I will adhere to it. Do your best for" (here my uncle laid his finger on the locket) "and I will do my best for you both. Good-bye, Annie."

Annie Wolsey took the hand which my uncle extended towards her, and having muttered a brief farewell in a voice too broken with emotion for me to make out the words of which it was composed, turned to leave. As she did so, my



aunt Gertrude entered the room ; and mistress and wife stood, scarce a yard apart, regarding each other in silence.

Aunt Gertrude was the first to speak. Bowing slightly to her rival, she addressed her in icy tones, but with admirable restraint : " I beg your pardon, Miss Wolsey, for so unceremoniously interrupting **your conversation** with my husband. Would you like me to retire until you have concluded your business with him ? "

The calmness of the American lashed the despairing English-woman into an uncontrollable outburst of fury. " No ! " she screamed ; " I would not ! Stay with him till he casts you off as he has cast off me ! I am not the woman of his heart ; I never was, nor are you. That place was my sister's, and I have naturally filled it better than ever you can. " Turning to my uncle, she continued : " As for you, I cannot hate you. I would to God I could ; I have tried and failed. But I can die. My courage is greater even than your means, and if I may not have you I will have nothing of yours but your living image, our son, " and with these words the enraged woman drew from her bosom a small packet of papers and cast it contemptuously upon the table. Then, drawing herself up to her full height, and darting one last indignant glance at my uncle, with flushed face and flashing eyes Annie Wolsey passed out of the open door and was gone.

Uncle Sam, who had been a silent spectator of this scene, made a motion as though he would follow her, which aunt Gertrude perceiving, threw her arms around his neck and prevented. My uncle endeavoured to put his wife gently aside, but could not. " Follow her, Ernest, follow her ! " he cried ; " don't leave her while she is in this mood. Quick, or she is lost ! "

I hastened down the long staircase and reached the sidewalk in front of the hotel just as Miss Wolsey was stepping into a landau which awaited her.

" Annie, " I exclaimed, " Annie, dear ; wait one moment. I want to speak with you. "



"I have nothing more to say to anyone who bears your name," said the companion of my childhood, regarding me with a stony, immovable expression as she fastened the door from the inside. "Drive on!"

And in obedience to her command the driver lashed his horses, and my girl-aunt was borne swiftly away. I watched the carriage on its course down town until it turned aside towards Union Square, and then slowly, and with a heavy heart, I re-entered the hotel and ascended the stairs.

When I reached my uncle's room I was met at the door by aunt Gertrude, looking very pale and agitated. "Ernest," she asked, "will you please go below and fetch some brandy as quickly as you can? I don't want to ring for it."

I instantly disappeared, and in two or three minutes at most had returned with the required restorative. My aunt was waiting where I had left her, and seemed anxious, I thought, that I should not re-enter the room. "Thank you," she said; "your uncle is not very well; but if you go over to Orange at once and fetch my sister, you will find us both at our house when you return with her. You had better not tell Connie anything of what you have seen and heard to-day."

I assured my aunt I would not do so; and having wished her well out of her vexations, I departed for Orange.



## XXIX.

### CONCORD.

While evil passions sway this human life,  
Sweet Peace stands veiled in presence of the strife ;  
Yet ready she to show her lovely face  
At kindly word or simple act of grace.

SUCH scenic beauty as the United States of America can boast—and it is of wide extent and infinite variety—owes everything to nature, nothing to man. American cities, almost without exception, consist of unpretentious buildings disposed in square blocks, so that wherever the gaze of the urban pedestrian is directed, his eye is met by monotonous right lines of avenues and streets. The feverish pursuit, the abasing worship, of the almighty dollar which animates the majority of the American people, killing the artistic instincts inherited from their European progenitors and leading them to condemn Beauty and deify Utility, while it has resulted in little or nothing to make American city life tolerable, has done much to spoil the natural features of America. Everywhere in the new world the traveller is confronted by advertisements of appalling dimensions and hideousness. Liberal-minded Americans who have travelled protest against such wanton outrages on good taste more loudly even than the stranger ; but they see no way to its suppression, except through some sweeping reform which shall rid the rabble-ruled American cities of their bribe-taking pashas, miscalled aldermen. Of few things has more been said and less done than the utter rottenness of American municipalism, and I am not prepared to waste words on the subject.



Indeed, this passing reference is merely introductory to the expression of my admiration for what I esteem an excellent idea, worthy of more extended adoption in America or any other country where the proportion of men to acres is not too great. I refer to Llewellyn Park, a beautiful tract of some seven hundred and fifty acres, extending from base to brow of Orange Mountain, by Orange City, in the State of New Jersey. Llewellyn Park, which is handsomely laid out and carefully kept for the common good, is studded here and there with elegant villas, not more than sufficiently numerous to impart a sense of present humanity to a charming natural spot, in the choicest portion of which exceptionally well-treated locality stood Belle Vue Cottage, formerly the residence of the late Erasmus Marsh, but now the property of his daughter, my aunt Gertrude.

Notwithstanding my eager haste to see and speak with my dear Constance, I could not refrain from pausing a brief space to contemplate the delightful home where the infancy of my promised wife and her sister had been passed. The cottage, constructed of wood, was of low elevation, but covered much ground ; it was designed with fantastic irregularity, window, and doors of strange pattern and diverse size appearing at the most unexpected angles. The cottage was sheltered at the back by a wide semicircle of large, closely planted trees, whose foliage had now assumed the beautiful golden tint of autumn, while along its front ran a commodious piazza, shaded with white canvas, from which one might step on to the sun-scorched lawn, or view the fine prospect between it and the foot of Orange Mountain. In this situation it is difficult to realise that the great city of New York lies so nearly as thirteen miles eastward ; but so it is. However, I did not give much consideration to that circumstance, but having admiringly regarded that part of the neighbourhood within my view, I entered the grounds of Belle Vue Cottage. The heaviness of spirit, born of my painful experience that morning, had quite passed away, and I was elated by the prospect of presently accompanying



one to gain whom I had suffered and dared so much. My presence being challenged at no point by either closed gate, servant, or dog, I approached the steps which led up to the piazza; and there, to my intense delight, I discovered my loved one reclining in a hammock of netted silken cords. As usual with her, she was dressed very plainly, entirely in white, which greatly enhanced her natural gracefulness of figure and feature as she lay, all unconscious of my admiring gaze, her delicate cheek resting upon one hand, while with the other she grasped the book that absorbed her attention.

“Connie!”

The startled fair one dropped her book and looked at me with an expression of joyous surprise.

“So you have come at last, Ernie, dear!” she exclaimed, as I assisted her to descend from the hammock, for which service, before it was half rendered, I paid myself with a kiss. “Why, what a long time you have been away! I began to fear I should never see or hear from you again!”

“That could hardly be and I were alive, my own little pet; but you will remember it was agreed between us that I was not to write or telegraph unless my mission to England succeeded. I am sorry to tell you it has failed utterly, and my fortunes, whatever they may prove to be, are to make. Never again will I reject the advice of my own Connie.”

“Not until the next time, you mean; or until you weary of me,” amended Constance, pouting.

“Oh my darling, that can never be!”

“Make no rash assertions, my dear Ernie, and so perhaps escape broken vows. My sister, worthier far than I—but have you seen poor dear Gertie? How did you know where to find me?”

“I left aunt and uncle at Windsor Hotel not more than an hour ago. They are good friends now, I am happy to say, and I have this very morning had positive proof that the cause of their estrangement is now finally removed. At their request I have come to fetch you to New York, and before we can



reach the city they will be once more in their own home, if indeed they are not already there, awaiting us."

"Thank Heaven for that! My most ardent wish is accomplished. There," continued my young lady, reading the faintest possible reproach in my eyes, "don't look at me like that. I welcome you with my whole heart, and will commit my life and all that is mine to your keeping, as I promised you I would; but oh, Ernie, I can never think so well of men, or of women either, as once I did."

"Dear Connie, that is only another way of saying that your experience is wider than it was—the reason why old people are so sceptical. But bad as the world is, there are always a faithful few; and I do hope you will believe me one of them until you find that I am not."

Here my innocent, artless lover threw her arms around my neck. "I will believe you, my own dear Ernie," she cried, "though to do so were to hazard all. You bring good news, greatly more welcome to me than the discovery of any number of treasure chests."

"I am as rejoiced to bring the good news as you are to receive it; but at the same time I confess I am much disappointed in the other matter. There are now only two things which prevent my perfect happiness—but in the heaven of your companionship I shall forget them both. I would have liked my fortune to have been something greater than I can carry in my pocket, and I regret my estrangement from my father."

"The first is not worth thinking of. There are not many New York girls with more dollars than my father left to me. We shall not want for anything. The second can be removed. I have never seen your father; but if I were to go to him after we are married and ask him if he would like to see my husband, all his love for his son would return—that is to say, if it has ever left him, which I much doubt."

"Connie, you are a jewel. Was ever man so happy as I?"

"Many a one, and gone out of his way to terminate his



happiness. I have just been reading—no, I will not tell you what it is I have been reading.”

“Please let me see the book for a moment,” I pleaded.

“Not for the world!” exclaimed my wilful charmer, breaking from my embrace. And hastily picking up the volume from the floor, where a few moments before she had allowed it to fall, with a merry laugh Connie tripped lightly from the room.

I could not pursue her, for being unacquainted with the geography of the house, I knew not into what trespass I might be tempted.

Not many minutes elapsed before Miss Marsh reappeared with her maid, both dressed for walking, Connie’s pretty face, almost hidden beneath a wide-brimmed straw hat, appearing like a beautiful miniature in a large frame.

“Now, Ernest, dear, I am ready to accompany you.”

I drew close to Connie and spoke softly to her.

“Valerie,” said Miss Marsh, turning to her maid, “this gentleman has been so rude as to say that he would prefer to be without your company. You will please start for New York in about an hour.”

The French girl smiled and gracefully disappeared, murmuring something which sounded like “*Rien n’est beau que le vrai.*”

The journey from Orange to New York I still remember as one of my most delightful experiences, surpassing even that trip on my uncle’s yacht when Constance first promised to be mine. I could not fail to remember that upon that, to me, happy occasion, my dear one was distressed by an affair the termination of which now rejoiced her. Indeed, I now began to doubt if there could be found within the borders of the American Union any lighter-hearted lovers than we two; and I congratulated myself on my near prospect of a charming wife, the fortunate possessor of every esteemed attribute of that character.

On reaching my uncle’s house we were welcomed by aunt Gertrude, in whom, notwithstanding her more than usual



reserve, I thought I could detect a sense of satisfaction, not to say of suppressed jubilation. Uncle Sam not being present, I inquired where he was.

"On the roof enjoying a cigar," replied aunt Gertrude; "he wishes you to go up to him as soon as you conveniently can."

"Go now, Ernie, dear," whispered Constance; "I would like to talk to Gertie alone for an hour;" and the next minute I was standing before uncle Sam, breathless from the haste with which I had mounted the stairs.

"So Annie would not listen to you?" were my uncle's first words.

"No; but how did you know that?" I asked, astonished.

"I saw from the window how she received you. But she spoke, I think. What was it she said?"

"That she wanted nothing to do with anybody of our name."

"Ah, poor girl! I am sorry for her. Do you know, Ernest, I have a haunting fear that she will carry out that horrible threat of hers."

"What! destroy her life? Oh, uncle, I hope not!"

"And I am sure I do; but it is hard to say. Women are such uncertain creatures, so much swayed by impulse, so little by reason, that men who have had most to do with them sometimes understand them least. In less than four years I have lavished upon that girl more money than has passed through the hands of every member of her family for three generations, and I am prepared to behave as liberally to her in the future as I have in the past; yet now that I cease to personally associate with her because of circumstances of her own creation, such as I have always told her would render that step necessary, she renounces my gifts and threatens her own life."

"How can she live without your aid?"

"I can't say. She has some money in hand, without doubt, but it must soon be exhausted; and she owns about a hundred thousand francs worth of jewellery which I have given



to her at one time and another in Paris. But what is the good of that?"

I made no answer, and uncle Sam went on—

"Well, if her acts should prove as foolish as her words, I shall regret it perhaps as much as anybody; but I shan't reproach myself. If Annie had been less like your mother, I don't suppose I should ever have noticed her. By-the-by, how wonderfully like she is to your mother, and how nearly you resemble them both!"

"I am not sure I feel flattered by that speech," I ventured to observe.

"Truth is never flattery," said uncle Sam. "However, I have done my part and can do no more. If matters work out well, why, well; if ill, why then they must be borne. The real authors of this mischief are old Wolsey and your father, who years ago treated me villainously in respect of my engagement to your mother. Their breach of faith has, I am happy to think, at last recoiled on them both. Of course everybody admits that two wrongs don't make a right; but revenge retains its primitive sweetness despite that admission. At the same time I shouldn't have gone out of my way to taste of it, but Chance set it in my path. When I consider how good a wife I have, how largely her fortunes have aided mine, and how great is her love and care for me, I frankly confess that I regret the whole incident, and am inclined to regard vindictiveness as a species of folly to be guarded against."

"I am glad to hear you say that, uncle. It augurs well for a cherished hope of mine."

Uncle Sam, affecting not to perceive my allusion, went on:

"You have been a lucky boy, Ernest, and I congratulate you on your good fortune. Without money, experience, or talent, you have won for yourself a charming young lady, whose dollars, beauty, and training make her a match that an English duke might envy. Why it is that she has so lightly agreed to hand over to you the command of herself and her large fortune passes my understanding; for you will pardon my telling you



plainly that I fail to discover in you any remarkable ability. On the contrary, you impress me as a man of feeble judgment and irresolute will. Your recent mission to England was conducted with a lamentable want of skill ; and again, to-day, a man of average tact would have refrained from speaking to Miss Wolsey in the very heat of her passion : he would have followed her and exerted his persuasiveness later. Don't look so downcast ; if I didn't greatly esteem you, do you suppose I would trouble myself to point out your weak places ? ”

“ Isn't your rebuke heavier than my shortcomings deserve ? ” I inquired timidly.

“ Not a bit ! Digest it well, and you will derive inestimable benefit from it ; it may induce you to cultivate caution, a quality which at present you greatly need, and will need yet more when your lucky stars have endowed you with the control of Connie's dollars ; for you must know that to hold money is second in difficulty only to the acquisition of it : nay, to some natures, its retention is the more difficult feat. I would earnestly advise you not to speculate with any portion of Connie's fortune, but to be content with its present disposition, chosen for the most part by her father—as clear-headed a man as ever owned a railroad. With its present investments, all made with a view to security rather than high rate of interest, you can draw dividends enormously in excess of your utmost requirements. As neither you nor your fathers before you have ever had any money to speak of, there is some danger that in your new and luxurious circumstances you may lose your head ; and it is that contingency I would warn you against. Why don't you light a cigar ? ”

This speech removed somewhat of the depressing effect produced by the destructive criticism which preceded it, and under the soothing influence of the weed I soon recovered my equanimity.

“ Your disposition,” continued uncle Sam, “ unless I entirely misread it, is affectionate and domestic ; and with so charming a wife as yours will prove, you ought easily to avoid such folly



as mine. If you don't, you will lack even such excuse as I can make, and that I don't find many people accept as satisfactory. Besides, you must never forget that Connie is a clever, observant girl. When I say clever, I don't mean you to infer that she knows anything about Greek quantities, or that she has projected any new theory for the sewing on of shirt buttons or the reconstitution of society, but her discernment is such that it would not be easy for a man of your parts to play her false, while it would be eminently unprofitable for you to be foiled in the attempt."

"Nothing is further from my thoughts than such baseness," I protested warmly.

"I don't in the least doubt it ; but for your own sake as well as for Connie's, watch that you may not lapse from your present right thinking. Have you arranged when the event is to come off, and do you intend to acquaint your father with the important step you are about to take?"

"I shall ask Connie to-morrow, or this evening if I get the chance, to name the day when she will make me the happiest man in the world ; and at the same time I shall acquaint her with my impatience of delay. I shall not inform my father. Connie has promised to negotiate peace with him after we are married."

"Ha ! and how are you off for money ? Got none, I suppose."

"Oh, not quite so bad as that ! I have the four thousand two hundred dollars you gave me this morning intact, and the greater part of the thousand dollars which you gave me just before I went to England."

"You are no spendthrift, I am glad to find ; but the sums you mention are quite useless to a man about to take a wife, for although in your case the wife will be wealthy, there will be many things which must, if only for decency's sake, be paid for by you and by no other. Of course you will want to travel for two or three months before you make your final plans for settlement, and during that time you will appear to better



advantage if you refrain from drawing upon your wife's estate, so I will place a sum of money to your credit at Drexel's, and provide you with a cheque-book. You may regard it as a loan and return it to me later, if you will ; or you may accept it as a gift—just which you prefer."

With these words my uncle rose from his seat and cast away the end of his cigar, paying not the least attention to the thanks with which I greeted his extraordinary offer. "I must really smoke less tobacco," he said ; "that makes my eighth cigar to-day, and it is not yet three o'clock. I have smoked more this week than I generally smoke in a month—I suppose because of the worry I've been subject to. O Lord, I wish I knew that that girl was safe !"

As my uncle turned to accompany me downstairs I noticed that the expression of his face betrayed considerable anxiety, and that his general demeanour lacked much of its accustomed buoyancy.



### XXX.

#### UNCLE SAM DOWN.

'Tis strange, the stubborn pride of puny man  
Who rates his strength the equal of his hope,  
And wots not of his littleness until,  
Touched by the Unseen Power, his forces fail.

ABOUT three weeks after the events related in the last chapter I sat writing in a beautiful room which my uncle had ordered to be specially arranged and set apart for my use for so long as I remained his guest, when Constance unexpectedly entered and smilingly handed me a letter. Having accepted the missive and paid its fair carrier with that which among lovers is accounted current coin, I moved from the table to a settee near the window; for no one could have too much light who attempted to decipher the caligraphy of the Rev. Mr Price, which consisted of a series of hastily scrawled symbols without the remotest resemblance to any known letter—in brief, that kind of writing which breeds errors, blinds compositors, maddens proof-readers, and moves the irritable to profanity. It took me at the least ten minutes to acquaint myself with the writer's meaning, and while I was so engaged my faithful Connie sat on the floor at my feet and toyed with three sequins which had recently been attached to my watch-chain—the identical coins alleged to have been found in the room which my uncle occupied the last time he stayed at Holdenhurst Hall.

“Can you make it all out?” asked Connie, looking up.



"All but a few words, dear," I answered; and then proceeded to read the following letter aloud:—

NO. —, EAST FIFTY-NINTH STREET,  
NEW YORK CITY, October 27, 18—.

DEAR MISS MARSH,—This day, the eve of my departure for England, I have received from the worthy rector of Holdenhurst Major, the Rev. Mr Silas Fuller, my esteemed friend and former colleague, intelligence of a grave nature that my Christian conscience will not permit me to conceal from you, though in acquainting you therewith I incur a risk of being credited with low and personal motives.

The Rev. Mr Fuller informs me that on the ——— ult., an old man, who had been for many years in the service of Mr Robert Truman, died very suddenly, from some unexplained cause, during an altercation with Mr Ernest Truman. The altercation, which was in part overheard by another servant, is supposed to have related to money. Circumstances attending the burial of the old butler are no less suspicious than the manner of his death, interment having taken place by virtue of a certificate given by the local doctor, a personal friend of the Trumans. A few of the more intelligent among the inhabitants of Holdenhurst are asking (not unreasonably, I think) why an inquest was not held, and are hazarding various guesses as to what circumstances the Truman family desired to conceal in avoiding so rightful a course.

Though to my lasting regret there may never be any love between us, I trust that my respect for your honour and happiness is undiminished; and I earnestly hope you may see fit to assure yourself, ere it be too late, of the character of the man you have engaged to marry, as I am unable to contemplate without the most painful feelings your alliance with a man upon whom rests the suspicion of manslaughter or worse. —Believe me, dear Miss Marsh, always your faithful friend,

EVAN PRICE.



"What a mean, spiteful fellow Mr Price is, to be sure!" exclaimed Constance. "I never liked the expression of that man's face, nor his manner, but I am surprised he should write such a letter as that. What good can he hope to get from it?"

"Don't you see, dear, how much he would like to separate us? I have already told you the facts upon which he has based this letter."

"Yes, Ernest, and please don't tell me again. I'm afraid I'm a little tired of speaking and thinking about these things"—alluding to the sequins which she was turning round and round with her delicate white fingers. "But suppose Mr Price could separate us, how would that benefit him? He knows I would not marry him in any case. I have told him so in plain words many a time."

"Spiteful and mischievous as the man is, I don't in the least doubt, my dear Connie, but that he loves you as sincerely as his nature allows him to love. Indeed it is difficult to conceive of any man not loving you who has once seen you, and it is the quality of love never to entirely despair of achieving its object until that object is irrevocably lost. This letter was written yesterday, so by now Mr Price is on his way to England. Before he reaches Liverpool you will be my wife, and when he learns that fact perhaps he will cease to interest himself in our affairs. Only six days! Fancy that, pet!"

"Yes, fancy it! How sudden it has all been! I am in disgrace with my friends for deserting them, and in defending myself I have laid the blame upon you for monopolising my time. I say, Ernie, dear, one of the six girls whom I have asked to be bridesmaids has declined."

"Who is she?" I inquired.

"Miss Christison—you know who I mean; the young lady who can't marry without losing her fortune."

"O yes; I remember her. Who will take her place?"

"Inez Juarrez."



"You must forgive Miss Christison on account of her absurd and cruel circumstances."

"Of course, dear, but——"

At that moment our conversation was interrupted by the loud and continuous ringing of electric bells within the house and the hasty running of servants up and down the stairs. Constance and I started to our feet and listened for a moment, and the confusion continuing, we left the room to ascertain its cause. Outside the door, upon the landing, we met my aunt Gertrude, who was descending the stairs dressed for going out, and I no sooner saw her face, veiled though it was, than I perceived that she was painfully agitated.

"What is the matter?" we both asked as with one voice.

"Oh, Connie, dear, don't stop me! A clerk at Mills Building has just telephoned to say that Sam has been seized with sudden illness, and I am not to lose a moment in going to him. I fear he is dead, though they say he is not."

"Dead! Impossible! An hour ago he was here and well!"

But aunt Gertrude could not hear the exclamations either of her sister or me, for she had scarcely paused in her descent while imparting this terrible information. A world of confused and painful thoughts filled my mind, and a strange pallor overspread the face of the dear one at my side; the colour faded from her lips, and but for my timely support she would have fallen. The next moment the street door was heard to close, and the carriage containing aunt Gertrude was driven rapidly away.

Leading Constance back into the room, we both sat down upon a couch and regarded each other in silence. I consulted my watch; the hour wanted twenty minutes to midday. Uncle Sam had left home to go to his office at ten o'clock, he being then in sound health and high spirits. Constance was the first to speak. "I can't believe, Ernie, dear," she said, "that anything very serious can be the matter, though Gertrude seems so frightened. How could there be?" But the



unconcealed agitation of the fair speaker belied her words, and I was in no condition to support them by argument. "Let us go into Sam's study and inquire by the telephone how he is now," she presently added.

"Yes, certainly ; that is a good thought. But doesn't uncle keep his study locked ?"

"Yes ; but Gertie also has a key of it, and I don't suppose she stayed to lock it in her haste."

The suggestion was no sooner made than adopted, and the study door being open, as Connie had surmised, she entered and at once made her inquiry. I can never forget her appearance as she stood with the tube applied to her ear, her youthful beauty showing grandly despite the pallor induced by her anxiety, while I watched with deadly interest the varying expressions of her face as a clerk at Mills Building informed her of uncle Sam's condition. Presently Connie restored the tube to its place, and throwing her arms around my neck, burst into tears in the manner of one whose fortitude fails at unexpected release from some supreme dread.

"What has happened ?" I asked, catching my breath.

"Sam learned on his arrival at his office that Miss Wolsey had died suddenly in Paris, and the news so upset him that he talked incoherently for a time, and then had some sort of seizure, greatly frightening his clerks ; but he is conscious now, and Gertie is with him."

There are few tasks which the complex relations of human-kind impose upon us more painful or difficult than being called to comfort a sorrowful one whose burden presses with equal or with greater weight upon ourselves, and I could scarce restrain my own grief while endeavouring to pacify Constance, whose agitation arose entirely from the present circumstances of uncle Sam and aunt Gertrude—circumstances which, though I was by no means indifferent to them, were in my case obscured by consideration of the tragedy in Paris. Constance Marsh had never seen Annie Wolsey, nor was it until quite recent days that she had been informed of the



existence of that unhappy woman ; and not only that, but for other and stronger reasons it would have been absurd to expect that Constance should regard the death of her sister's rival otherwise than as the welcome extinction of an unseen but potent power for mischief. While recognising this to the full, I could not but think of the girl-companion of my childhood ; of how after Annie's brothers and sisters had one by one all been laid to rest in the shadow of Holdenhurst church she alone remained, and was the one delight of her widowed father's life ; of how, later, she had fled from he who loved her so well, and how tirelessly he had sought her again until at last his efforts were crowned with success, though only to precipitate the needless and awful waste of her young life. I thought also of the cruel effect this disaster must necessarily have upon my grandfather, and wondered if that careworn old man was yet acquainted with it, and whether Annie had taken her child's life as well as her own. The fear to which my uncle had several times given expression being now realised, it occurred to me that its ill effects upon my powerful friend, said to be already severe, might possibly be of a permanent character. Something of these troublesome thoughts and speculations must have been apparent in my face to have induced Connie to smile at me through her tears, and to repeat those vows with which we had consoled each other in previous difficulties—that come what might, and we were both alive, nothing should again separate us.

Constance and I quitted the study and returned to my room. When asked to decipher Mr Price's letter I was engaged in making a fair copy of a list of my future wife's possessions, which uncle Sam had roughly drawn up for my use—a heavy task, to which I had already devoted two whole days. Though not more than three-fourths of my transcript was completed perceived I was too disturbed to advantageously apply myself to it again that day, and therefore hastily put away my papers and devoted myself to Constance. After nearly an hour had been spent in a profitless exchange of opinions and the ventur-



ing of various surmises, we decided to go together to Mills Building and ascertain by actual observation exactly upon what our anxiety was founded.

When we arrived at Mills Building we found my uncle's offices deserted by all but one clerk, and the usual business of the place suspended for the rest of the day. Telegraphic tape was automatically unwinding from a score or more cylinders, and falling unread into the baskets placed to receive it. On my uncle's desk, in an inner private room, lay a pile of correspondence, the greater part unopened. The clerk in charge was brushing his hat preparatory to locking the doors and departing, and had we been a few minutes later we should have found the office closed. From this individual we learned that Mr Truman had become violently agitated immediately after reading a letter, the envelope of which bore the Paris postmark ; that he had rapidly paced up and down his room, incoherently talking to himself meanwhile ; and that altogether his behaviour had been so extremely different from his usual habit of self-possession that the people about him became alarmed. Mr Truman's secretary, Mr Fisk, who enjoyed his employer's confidence more than anybody else, took the letter from Mr Truman's unresisting hands, and read it to ascertain what had created this disturbance. The letter, which was very brief and couched in affectionate terms, stated that the writer would that night seek oblivion in the waters of the Seine, and that she commended her innocent son to his care. It bore the signature of Annie Wolsey.

"And how is Mr Truman now?" I inquired. "Is he better, and has he gone home with Mrs Truman?"

"I think he is better than he was," replied the clerk. "We were afraid he had become crazy, and sent for Dr Herrmann. Dr Herrmann, who arrived before Mrs Truman, said that Mr Truman was suffering from intense excitement, but that with proper treatment there was no cause for alarm. The doctor soon afterwards took his patient to Astor House, where he now is."



Astor House is a hotel about two minutes' walk from Mills Building, and thither Constance and I at once repaired without waiting to hear anything more the clerk had to tell. There in a private room we found uncle Sam, attended by his wife and Dr Herrmann. The two latter were making preparations to take their patient to his home, for which purpose a carriage waited at the door. My uncle, who was lying on a couch, appeared very depressed, and the expression of his eyes struck me as peculiar—quite unlike anything I had observed before. He took not the least notice of Connie or me, but turned his face towards the wall soon after we entered the room, and pressed his hand to his forehead as if in pain. I seized the opportunity while Connie was quietly conferring with her sister to ask Dr Herrmann what he thought of the case.

“Mr Truman has always overworked himself,” said the doctor, “and there is some danger of brain trouble consequent on the bad news he has received; but it may very likely be avoided with care and quietude. He is a man of immense vitality.”

At the moment of our arrival at the hotel preparations were in progress for getting my uncle back to his own house. This was not easy to do, as he could not be got even for one moment to speak or think of anything but the news from Paris; and he seemed to resent the presence of anybody except his wife, though he did not so express himself. However, Dr Herrmann and I with some difficulty succeeded in inducing him to enter the carriage, and he started for East Thirty-fourth Street accompanied by his wife and doctor, Constance and I returning by another way.

As soon as uncle Sam arrived home he was put to bed in a darkened room and ice was applied to his head, the patient submitting to these unpleasant arrangements without making the least protest—an additional proof, if any were needed, of how completely his mind was absorbed in painful contemplation of the tragedy which he had so much feared.

After Dr Herrmann had departed, aunt Gertrude took me



aside. "I fear your uncle is down for a serious illness," she said. "I am told he must be kept very quiet, and to ensure that I will nurse him myself. But he wearies me and distresses himself by begging without cessation that I will go to Paris and take charge of—of that Englishwoman's son, and bring him here. I would not hesitate to do so if my husband were well ; but I dare not, I will not, leave him in his present state. Will you help me?"

This appeal, the purport of which I could not misinterpret, alarmed me greatly. "I would gladly go to any part of the world on your business," I answered quickly, "if only it lay in my power to do so ; and, apart from my love for Constance, I can think of nothing more gratifying than doing anything to oblige you or uncle Sam, but I have sworn an oath that I will never again leave your sister until she is my wife, and she is pledged to me in equal terms."

Aunt Gertrude smiled faintly. Perhaps she was thinking of lovers' vows, and of her own experience of their value. "I have already telegraphed to three of our friends in Paris," she said, "urging them to discover and protect the child at any cost, and to let us know as soon as possible that this has been done ; but I have not yet received any replies."

"You have not allowed sufficient time. It is barely two hours since you were summoned to Mills Building."

"I have already assured your uncle that if the child can be found I will adopt it as my own, and that assurance has rallied him more than anything else that has been said or done. If only I could show him a telegram, proving that the child is now in good hands, I think he would soon be himself again."

"I believe you will receive such a telegram some time to day."

"We will hope so," said aunt Gertrude quietly. And having uttered these words she returned to her husband's room, and I sought Constance.



## XXXI.

### AT NEWPORT.

When coward-making Conscience bulks immense,  
Calm Reason flies, Oblivion drowns each sense,  
Until, despite infinity of pains,  
Each tortured faculty itself regains ;  
And even then, with past events opprest,  
Cruel Memory denies her victim rest.  
In silence Madness lies ; but idle words  
The Conscience-smitten some relief affords.

UNCLE SAM rapidly became worse after he returned home, and soon his condition excited the utmost alarm. Two renowned American physicians exerted their skill for the benefit of the patient, who was never left without the attendance of one or other of them. He was said to be suffering from phrenitic meningitis, induced by too prolonged tension of the faculties—an inflated way of describing the simple fact that his mind had temporarily succumbed under the anxiety and grief to which it had been subjected.

For many weeks aunt Gertrude nursed her husband with untiring devotion, and in her anxiety that nothing should be neglected or ill done she did much work which might well have been left to other hands. My marriage to Constance was indefinitely postponed, and no thought given to any matter but the present condition of the patient, for whom even his physicians acknowledged that they feared the worst.

Mrs Fisk, wife of my uncle's confidential secretary, was induced by aunt Gertrude to undertake a journey to Paris for the purpose of bringing to New York the young boy whose welfare seemed more than all else to engage my uncle's lucid



moments. Meanwhile telegrams arrived assuring us that the child was well and in good hands, which assurances were duly conveyed to the patient, on whom they appeared to have a beneficial effect.

At this period my eyes were first opened to certain peculiarities of American journalism. The sudden withdrawal of Samuel Truman from the financial world of New York greatly interested the editors of the numerous newspapers which flourish in that city, and not a day passed without publication of long and for the most part apocryphal accounts of his condition, and yet longer and wholly apocryphal speculations thereon. To obtain the slender information out of which this verbose twaddle was ingeniously spun, an intermittent tinnabulation was kept up at the street-door the whole day by brazen-faced emissaries from *The Trumpeter*, *The Defender*, *The Thunderer*, *The Luminary*, and *The Globe*, who with the most unblushing effrontery plied everybody who passed through the hall with questions more or less relevant to the business they had come upon. At an early stage of my uncle's illness, while I was as yet unaware how utterly unscrupulous and shameless is the American interviewer, I courteously spoke, perhaps for five minutes, to a reporter who represented *The Message*, an evening offshoot of *The Trumpeter*. Accidentally taking up a copy of *The Message* a few hours later, to my intense disgust I discovered therein two columns of matter purporting to be what I had said, while another half column was devoted to an analytical account of my personal appearance, the whole pestilent farrago of lies and nonsense being garnished with a dozen or so alliterative headlines set in large type. The colour of my hair and eyes, the pattern of my necktie, the set of my trousers about the knees, together with many other less important particulars of a personal nature, were all duly chronicled for the delectation of the intelligent American public.

Week after week passed away, and still the patient hovered uncertainly between life and death. Mrs Fisk safely returned to New York with her infant charge, a handsome, bright-eyed,



intelligent boy of exceeding vivacity, happily ignorant of his mother's fate and his father's danger. The little stranger, instead of being regarded as an unwelcome addition to my uncle's family, as might not unreasonably have been expected, was received by aunt Gertrude with the tenderest consideration, and everything needful for his wellbeing was provided. By sundry apparently trivial but really profoundly significant words and acts aunt Gertrude, in whom, though she was a childless wife, the maternal instinct was strongly implanted, soon showed that the new-comer had found a place no less in her heart than in her house. Though my uncle was informed of the arrival of "the cardinal"—a style and title by which it appeared he had from the first designated his son—the doctors for the present forbade the child being presented to their patient. The nature of my uncle's business was such that it necessarily came to a standstill so soon as his direction of it ceased—a direction which hitherto he had never failed to exercise, personally when in New York City, and telegraphically when absent therefrom. Mr Fisk was regular in his attendance every morning at my uncle's house, and never failed to report the patient's condition to a host of his inquiring friends.

And thus November and the greater part of December passed away, the spirits of the little household in East Thirty-fourth Street being raised one day only to be dashed the next, according to the changeable condition of the patient, whose malady once or twice touched a point of extreme danger. But at the near approach of Christmas, when New York City lay covered with a thick mantle of snow and the sky was none the less clear because the temperature was extremely cold and icicles of prodigious length depended from parapet and casement, the patient took a very decided turn for the better. He talked less and more rationally, and was generally calmer; and he slept better and partook of more nourishment.

Though my uncle's medical advisers were not, at the first appearance of these signs, assured they portended a favourable issue, they did not hesitate to recognise in the good symptoms,



after they had endured for some days unabated, the beginning of complete recovery.

And so indeed it appeared. By the middle of January uncle Sam had so far recovered that he was permitted to sit by the fire in his room, and there one day he dispassionately discussed with me the tragedy which, to quote his own words, had "thrown him off his balance." His wife's loving care of "the cardinal" occasioned him much satisfaction, which he gratefully acknowledged in various ways; and it is to that circumstance I have always attributed, more than to all else besides, his complete recovery. At this juncture "the cardinal" was taken every morning by aunt Gertrude into the patient's room, where he was permitted to frisk about like a spaniel at his father's feet, and his gambols and his pertinent replies to questions which he could not possibly understand amused and delighted everybody present.

In the early stages of the patient's convalescence it was customary for Connie and me to read to him in turn. The reading was always selected by uncle Sam, and consisted for the most part of the daily papers and current fiction. One day I ventured to inquire if he would care to listen to some literature of a higher standard—a choice work by one of the great poets, for instance.

"No, no," said uncle Sam; "not for the world. I like poetry too well."

I confessed my inability to understand this reply.

"Poets," remarked uncle Sam, "are a pitiable handful of creatures. Their divine gifts are compensated by powerlessness to cope with the manifold treacheries of mankind, and consequent starvation and misery; and though by some strange accident one of the tribe not long ago slipped into the House of Lords, that was a blunder which will not be repeated; the majority gravitate quite naturally to the work-house. I love poetry, but can never read it without my heart aching for the poor wretch who expended his brain power in profitlessly weaving it. No, no, Ernest; open *The Trumpeter*



and tell me whether the Rothschilds have succeeded in floating that loan for the Austrian Government."

Slowly but surely the patient regained strength; but February was almost spent before the doctors would sanction his removal to Newport. Not until after he was able to go about the house unaided did the permanent changes wrought in him by the illness through which he had passed become fully apparent, and then it was seen that his once light brown hair had become almost entirely grey, that there were lines in his face which had not been observed before his illness, and that his step was a trifle slower and less elastic than of old. I thought his cheerfulness and his frank cynicism had escaped unaffected until he surprised me one morning by informing his friend, Mr Rosenberg, in my presence, that it was his intention as soon as he returned from Newport to close his speculative business affairs, and devote his remaining days to safeguarding such dollars as he had already acquired, leaving the pursuit of wealth to younger or more ardent spirits.

By the opening of March uncle Sam's family—in which, of course, I include myself, for long before this time I was regarded by everybody as properly belonging thereto—were comfortably settled in his villa at Newport, Rhode Island, where it was thought the ocean breezes and continued withdrawal from business cares might restore him to his former condition of mental and physical vigour.

Chatham Villa is one of the numerous artistic summer houses which abound in the southern portion of Rhode Island, and stands in extensive pleasure-grounds overlooking Narragansett Bay. As yet the weather was very cold for living in such an open situation, but the sky was almost always clear and bright, and scarcely a day of the seven weeks that we remained on the island passed without Constance and me, thickly clad with furs, taking an invigorating walk, in which exercises we were sometimes accompanied by my uncle and aunt, the former of whom would point out where the eight thousand British troops and their Hessian mercenaries were quartered



during the American Revolution, and the wastes where once flourished the fine groves which they cut down for fuel; and he would sometimes further describe how my countrymen had destroyed nearly five hundred of the houses and all the shipping then harboured there.

Although, all things considered, I must always look back upon my first sojourn at Newport with much gratification—indeed it could hardly be otherwise, for I enjoyed the almost uninterrupted company of Constance while I was there—I was rejoiced as the period fixed for our stay drew towards its close; and that for the best of all possible reasons.

Before leaving New York it had been arranged that Constance and I were to be married at the Presbyterian Church on Fifth Avenue, the first day of May, and we were to return to the city one week prior to that event. In accordance with the wish of everybody concerned, the ceremony was to be of the simplest possible character, and an hour after its accomplishment we were to leave for Saratoga, where a suite of rooms had been engaged for us at the Grand Union Hotel.

Preoccupied as I was with the anticipation of my approaching happiness, I could never forget my father, and in my more reflective moments was disturbed at hearing no news of him, either directly or indirectly; but I could not think of any better way of amending the unfortunate rupture between us than that which Constance had proposed—a plan not yet practicable, increasing my already great impatience with the slow-moving hours.

The eve of our return to New York at length arrived. April was drawing to its close, and the weather was so genial that we sat with comfort in a group by the opened glass doors which lead on to the verandah that overlooks the bay. Uncle Sam and I were smoking, a habit which by long use our respective ladies had grown to tolerate at all sorts of unseasonable times and places. Aunt Gertrude was engaged working a monogram in silken characters on a strange-looking purse of fine network which she had designed for her sister, while the



latter nestled at my side wistfully turning over an album of photographs. "The cardinal" had just been carried off to bed by his nurse, after amusing us for ten minutes by an exhibition of his precocity, his customary evening privilege. Uncle Sam was in high spirits, and more like his former self than at any time since his illness. After intently observing his wife's work for some minutes (my aunt had completed the C and was now outlining a T, *not* an M), he suddenly exclaimed, "Ernest, you are a lucky dog," to which inelegant assertion I signified my assent, at the same time taking Connie's hand in mine.

"Scores of English lords, heavily weighted with titles and debts, sigh in vain for an achievement such as yours," continued uncle Sam. "What a pity it is that man, always quick to perceive his misfortunes, is so frequently blind to the good things which fall to his share!"

"That will never be my case," I observed.

"So *I* thought," said uncle Sam; "but"—breaking off suddenly and pursuing another line of thought—"marriage is the most discussed yet least understood of human institutions. Though women so greatly outnumber men, good wives are as scarce as good husbands. Of course nothing can counterbalance the want of good personal qualities in either husband or wife, but there can be no matrimonial paragon who is unfurnished with dollars. I remember in my salad days, soon after I settled in this country, Van Rensselaer and I once amused ourselves by making some investigations as to the condition of the marriage market."

"What do you mean, Sam?" asked aunt Gertrude, looking up from her work.

"About twenty years ago," continued my uncle, "there lived in Rivington Street, New York, a matrimonial agent, who used to advertise in the daily papers that he was prepared to supply wives of every desirable quality to gentlemen of unblemished honour and respectable means, while of course his usefulness to ladies weary of single blessedness was equally great. To this professor's office Van Rensselaer and I one



day betook ourselves, and each planked down a fee of five dollars, which the agent, with a grateful smile, made haste to appropriate."

"What induced you to be so foolish?" asked my aunt.

"Sport, my dear Gertie, sport; nothing more, I assure you," said uncle Sam.

"Why, what sport could you find in giving your money to a cheat?"

"Very much; my five dollars were well invested. Admission to the agent's office alone was worth the fee. Ha! ha! I remember the place to this day," and uncle Sam reclined his head on the back of his chair, and chuckled.

"What was the place like?" I inquired.

"It was a fairly well-furnished office," said uncle Sam. "The walls were covered with shelves, on which stood letter cases and japanned tin boxes. In a corner of the office, on an elevated platform, a bald-headed old fraud of about sixty, the proprietor of the place, sat at a desk plentifully spread with ledgers. Packets of letters, held together by rubber bands, and piles of photographs, lay about in confusion, while close to the door stood a large table strewn with writing materials and printed forms whereon clients might concisely state their qualifications and requirements."

"Did the agent show you any of the photographs?" asked Constance.

"Dozens of them. One lady in particular I remember he recommended as a very suitable wife for me, his recommendation being based chiefly on the fact that she was an Englishwoman who, having passed the first blush of her youth (a statement which nobody who had glanced at her photograph would for a moment question), was free of the frivolities which usually accompany girlhood, and having been for some years a member of the London music-hall profession, she was an accomplished vocalist, who could divert my leisure with charming songs of an amusing character, many of them unknown to the best musicians. These qualities, the agent



argued, more than compensated for the lady's lack of property."

"Was that all the old man told you about her?" I inquired.

"I think it was," replied uncle Sam. "But I wrote to her the next day under the assumed name of Holdenhurst, and a day or so afterwards received her reply, dated from the Bowery, couched in orthography which I had not previously met with. One of her statements—that her dear pa had been killed some years before by a fall from a scaffold in the Old Bailey—impressed me as a very pleasant way of describing an unpleasant fact."

At this point I interrupted uncle Sam with my immoderate laughter, much to the surprise of aunt Gertrude and Constance, who, being imperfectly acquainted with London, perceived nothing to laugh at.

"How about Mr Van Rensselaer?" asked Constance, when my paroxysm of laughter had subsided sufficiently for her voice to be heard. "Did the agent recommend any of his clients as a suitable wife for that ugly old Dutchman?"

"Gently, Connie, please. Martin Van Rensselaer was a capital fellow, as good a judge of a railroad as was the Great Commodore himself; and his advice was always sound in matters where he was not personally interested. Poor old Martin is now beyond the veil against which I have been blindly beating."

"Yes, I know," persisted Constance; "but you have not answered my question. Did the agent recommend a wife for your friend as he did for you? If so, I would like to hear about her."

"I'm afraid I can't oblige you in that, Con; but of course the agent made a recommendation. It was his business to do so to everybody who consulted him."

"Mr Van Rensselaer didn't win his wife by such means as that, I am sure," observed aunt Gertrude.

"So am I," added uncle Sam.



"Do you think, Sam, any marriage was ever brought about by such horrid methods?" my aunt inquired.

"Without doubt, abundance of them," replied uncle Sam unhesitatingly. "Nothing that was ever said is more true than that humankind are mostly fools. And it is well that such is the case. Were it otherwise, then probably, though no one would starve, nobody would be able to live well. It is in the follies of his fellow-creatures that a sharp man finds his chances of aggrandisement. If that were not so, how could a host of professional politicians wax so exceeding fat in a country with democratic institutions such as exist here? The matrimonial agent of Rivington Street transgressed no law that I know of, or that I would enact were I invested with the attributes of Solon. He merely preyed upon fools—a perfectly legitimate process, sanctioned by the doctrine of the survival of the fittest. Pass me the cigar-case, Gertie, dear."

"Were you and your friend fools when you visited that office in Rivington Street?" inquired Connie, with a mischievous smile.

"Unquestionably we were," admitted uncle Sam, with charming frankness, "and on many other occasions besides."

"Nothing can ever induce me to believe that it is right to use superior natural gifts or knowledge to entrap the inexperienced and unwary," said my aunt.

"Power is its own justification. That which a man can do he may do."

"That is not right," asserted aunt Gertrude boldly.

"Nothing is right, nor likely to be," agreed uncle Sam.



## XXXII.

### Εὐρηκα.

The wanton fates, with teasing hand,  
Spread gorgeous gifts on treach'rous sand,  
By rocky paths and boundless main  
Fenced off from all who would them gain—  
All but the few (apart how far !)  
Who, born beneath some luckier star,  
Chancing their kind regards to meet,  
Have treasures scattered at their feet.

WHAT is time? The past has gone and cannot be recalled; the present is here, but imperfectly under our control; the future no man knows. Is there another subject which mankind regards in ways so numerous and diverse as time, the most generic and indefinite of terms? Only for the miserable wretch condemned to die on an appointed day do the fleeting hours expire with maddening rapidity; to the sufferer from any other form of torture they drag their course with most exasperating slowness. It is the privilege of the perfectly happy (if indeed there be any such) and the perfectly foolish (of whom everyone must surely know abundant examples) to disregard time.

The week which elapsed between our return to New York and my marriage to Constance seemed to me of supernaturally long duration. Love is impatient, and dressmakers and milliners monopolising. Though living in the same house as my affianced wife, I now saw very little of her; she was nearly always engaged in being measured, or fitted, or experimented



upon in some way by a contingent of French modistes, who came every day to the house and disorganised all its customary arrangements. Of the numerous dresses being prepared for my wife, though I heard a good deal about them, I was not for the present permitted to see one; but I would have endured that privation without murmuring if the companionship of my dear Constance had been spared to me.

However, all things come to those who wait—unless Death come first and capture the waiters, in which case the latter escape from their wants. Man's comfort is not more dependent upon events than upon their convenient sequence, a course often difficult to secure. Many an impecunious debtor, when his bill to some usurious son of Abraham has matured during the life of an old valetudinarian relative on whose demise he depended to meet it, has sighed over his powerlessness to transpose events.

At last the wedding morning came and I was almost happy. Ah, that word *almost*! Has the man yet lived of whom it could be truthfully said that he was *quite* happy? Long and varied experience makes me doubt it. With health, youth, and strength; a hundred thousand dollars to my credit at Drexel's; and a beautiful girl, magnificently dowered, for my wife; for what more could I wish, you ask. Why, for my father's presence this day and his approval of the lifelong contract I was about to make. Somehow, I could not keep from thinking of my father on this my wedding morning; and as I waited with uncle Sam and a small party of his friends in the Presbyterian Church on Fifth Avenue, where the ceremony was to take place, the old church at Holdenhurst, its unlikeness to the sacred building wherein I was, my father's lonely life now that I had left him, and the probable effect of the recent tragedy upon him and my grandfather Wolsey, largely engaged my mind, despite all efforts I could make to disregard them; until the organ, pealing forth the soul-stirring strains of Mendelssohn's *Wedding March*, announced the arrival of the bridal party, and my dear Constance, almost completely hidden



in white gossamer-like habiliments and attended by six maids, passed slowly up the church.

Of the events between that moment and the conclusion of the ceremony, when we all left the church, I for a long time retained only a confused and general recollection ; but finally the particulars of the ceremony took shape in my mind, and now I can clearly recall the tall, commanding form and the clear impressive voice of the grand old Ulsterman, the officiating minister of the church ; and my uneasy glances at uncle Sam (whom I had never seen in such a place before), and my fear lest he should create a diversion by some eccentric conduct.

Not until after the wedding party was assembled at breakfast did uncle Sam give rein to his usual pleasantry, and then to no very great extent. I remember he inquired, across the table, what my wife and I thought of the reverend gentleman's boots.

"Think of the reverend gentleman's boots !" I echoed in surprise. "Really I didn't observe them. Did you, Connie, dear?"

"Not very particularly," stammered my wife, ineffectually endeavouring to suppress a laugh.

"Why, how can you say that?" asked uncle Sam. "The reverend doctor wears the largest boots in New York, as many rash wagers know to their cost ; and I observed you both intently contemplating their dimensions while he was exhorting you to be mindful of your new duties. I assure you I am very glad if I am mistaken, for there could be no better proof of your attention to his precepts."

There was a suppressed titter at this ; but aunt Gertrude came to the rescue, and protested against remarks of a personal nature generally, and particularly in the case of a gentleman highly esteemed by all who had the privilege of his acquaintance. Uncle Sam agreed, and declared that he had only complimented the minister by asserting, in other words, that he had a larger understanding than any other man in New York.



Several of my uncle's friends tendered their congratulations in the time-honoured platitudes which have served on innumerable similar occasions, after which uncle Sam rose, and glass in hand, invited all present to drink to the health, prosperity, and long life of the bride and bridegroom. "For the happy pair opposite, who with all the courage of inexperience and in defiance of sages and satirists have given those hostages to Fortune which so many of us would like to redeem, I entertain a very special and real affection," said uncle Sam. "The bride is the only sister of my dear wife, and a daughter of my friend and benefactor. I have known her all her life, and I say of her, that no truer or more amiable lady can be found between Maine and California. She was my ward; and my duty to her has been also my pleasure from the day I became her guardian until you saw me surrender her to her husband—and with her all that I held in trust for her, with something over and above. The bridegroom is the only son of one who, in my youthful days in England before I entertained a thought of setting foot on this continent, had promised to become my wife—a promise she was forced to break—and of my only brother, whom I do not expect to see again. It is for these reasons chiefly that I am prejudiced in favour of the bridegroom—for he is no genius, and I don't suppose his unaided efforts would ever have burdened him with much property; he is a trifle sentimental, and lacks resolution and fixity of purpose. Nevertheless he has proved himself a faithful friend and a pupil of at least average aptitude. It is with much pleasure and confidence that I ask you all to join me in wishing health, prosperity, and long life to Mr and Mrs Ernest Truman."

The toast was drunk with enthusiasm, everybody standing. In my brief reply I unreservedly admitted the accuracy of my uncle's estimate of my powers, and congratulated myself on having won not only his goodwill but a wife the equal of his own in fortune and every personal grace, notwithstanding the natural defects to which he had called attention; a retort which,



obvious as it was, seemed to put the company into great good humour.

By this the hour was reached when it was necessary that my wife should prepare for our departure to Saratoga, and the party left the tables to inspect the wedding gifts, which were exhibited in a large room devoted exclusively to that purpose—a valuable collection of jewels and fancy articles, at which I could not look without the painful thought that nothing from Holdenhurst was among them.

It wanted not more than half an hour of the time fixed for our departure when uncle Sam, with an air of mystery, beckoned me to follow him. I did so, wondering what his purpose could be. He led the way to his study, where aunt Gertrude and my wife awaited us, the latter now in a plain, tightly-fitting travelling dress, ready to depart. My uncle closed the door in a cautious way as soon as we had entered the room, which circumstance, as well as the serious looks of aunt Gertrude and my wife, filled me with alarm.

I was about to inquire the meaning of all this when uncle Sam spoke, my wife meanwhile observing me closely to note the effect of his words upon me. “A letter from England arrived for you this morning,” he said, “and by good fortune it fell into my hands. I have kept it from you until now, for your benefit; for you would not have liked your marriage to have been again postponed. I don’t know how it may prove, but I greatly fear that it contains bad news. However that may be, take courage for your wife’s sake as well as your own. Remember my recent experience, and never let it be said that the old man was braver than the young one.” And having spoken thus my uncle handed me a black-bordered letter bearing an English stamp and the postmark of Bury St Edmund’s.

A deadly faintness came over me, and a sudden dimness of sight prevented me from properly examining the letter. Without doubt my dear father was dead, and my one remaining wish could never now be realised upon earth. I handed the letter to my wife, who stood at my side, her little hand



affectionately laid upon my shoulder, and motioned to her to read it, which she at once proceeded to do ; and she had not read many words before our mutual fears vanished like a mist in presence of the morning sun.

HOLDENHURST HALL,  
BURY ST EDMUND'S, April 23, 18—.

MY DEAR BOY,—Come home. I shall know no rest until I see you here, and learn from your own lips that you are willing to forgive my errors of judgment. Consideration of the strange circumstances in which those errors were made, if not of the fact that you are my son whose welfare I have never ceased to desire, should induce you to afford me this gratification.

The treasure for which you so industriously sought in face of so much discouragement has been accidentally discovered by your grandfather, minus only the three sequins which you used to carry in your pocket ; and not only this, but also a quantity of peculiar Turkish jewellery and precious stones of great value. Your grandfather and I have together carefully examined the whole of the vast treasure and have placed it in safe keeping, secure from further accident, to await your return ; for I have determined that if you will but come home to me, the disposal of the treasure shall rest entirely with you. You deserve it ; and I declare it to be yours, and yours only, subject to the one condition, of your coming to Holdenhurst to take possession of it.

Some time ago your grandfather proposed that the old gabled granary at the back of the stables should be pulled down, and a more commodious granary built in another place. I agreed to the proposal, and last week the work of demolition was begun. At the north end of the loft, separated by a wooden partition from where the winter fodder has usually been stored, the treasure was discovered. That it was stolen from the crypt and secreted in the granary by Adams there can be no doubt, for the Venetian coins were in the black



chests which you found empty in the crypt one memorable night. Believing, as I then did, that the treasure had been quite otherwise abstracted, I ordered Adams to remove the empty chests from the crypt and use them for firewood ; but instead of obeying me, he appears to have conveyed them to his hiding-place in the granary, and refilled them with the coins which he must have taken from them not long before. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the man with the lamp whom you saw in the crypt was Adams, and that the occasion was his visit for removing therefrom the last of the coins. Amongst our discoveries in the granary is a leather bag containing six hundred pounds odd in modern English money, which I am unable to account for except by supposing that it represents the lifelong savings of the extraordinary miser who was my servant.

I address this letter to your uncle's house, not knowing certainly that it will find you there. Let me beg of you to take the first opportunity to acquaint my brother with the discovery of the sequins. If you can conveniently do so, perhaps you had better show him this letter. And in any case be sure to impress upon him my very great regret for what transpired when he was last here, and what happiness it would be for me if that incident could be buried in oblivion. Your grandfather, who on the very day of his daughter's rash act received from her a long letter taking upon herself great part of the blame of her past life, and entire responsibility for her tragic death, has no longer any cause for contention with your uncle, who, were he to come here, would be received with unrestrained friendship. Each member of our small family has been wronged by some other member ; no one of us stands blameless—not even yourself. Shall recrimination end only with our lives ? Is it presumptuous to hope for peace, or must existing divisions be permitted to widen with the lapse of years ? O Ernest, my boy, if only you could bring about the termination of feuds for which all concerned are the worse, and no one the better, you would then have



found a greater treasure than that which awaits you at Holdenhurst!

I have heard that you are about to be married to Miss Marsh; but the information reaches me very indirectly, and I am not assured of its truth. Should such happily be the case (for I have long perceived the disposition of your heart), I congratulate you, and wish you and your intended bride all possible human happiness.—Your affectionate father,

ROBERT TRUMAN.

“Ha!” exclaimed Uncle Sam bitterly, as my wife replaced the letter in my hands; “if only these two men had developed their present senses a year ago!”

“Oh, Sam, dear,” cried aunt Gertrude, throwing her arms round her husband’s neck, “what better news could you have than is contained in that letter?”

“None, *now*,” uncle Sam answered quietly.

“You will respond to your brother’s message in the spirit in which it is sent, will you not, dear?” pleaded aunt Gertrude, looking earnestly in her husband’s eyes. “A vow of enmity made in anger is always better broken than observed, and this manly apology comes from your brother, father of Connie’s husband. Remember, Sam, what I have forgiven, and if only to gratify me, send your brother a telegram that I will write.”

My uncle remained silent for a few moments, his gaze fixed upon the floor. Presently he looked up and said, “Write what message you will to those two men, Gertie, dear, and it shall be sent to them. My enmity is dead.”

For this generous declaration, aunt Gertrude rewarded uncle Sam with a kiss, my wife followed suit, and I wrung his hand in silent gratitude, almost overcome by the completeness of my good fortune.

The telegram indited by aunt Gertrude I have not seen but its healing effect is my constant daily experience, contributing—I cannot estimate how largely—to the happiness of our reunited family. The telegram which my wife and I



despatched to Holdenhurst was a long one, consisting of no fewer than a hundred words. It acquainted my father with our marriage, and promised that we would proceed to England after we had stayed at Saratoga one week, or a sixth part of the time which we had arranged to remain there.

"You are a tardy bridegroom, Ernest," said uncle Sam, consulting his watch; "and you have lost your train. It is now two o'clock, so you will no further delay your arrival at Saratoga by returning to the company for an hour"—a suggestion at once adopted, to the satisfaction of everybody except my wife's maid, who marvelled greatly at being bidden to remove her mistress's hat, which she had not long before adjusted with infinite care and precision.

The hour which the kindly fates had so unexpectedly placed at our disposal quickly passed, our assembled friends being infected with the great increase of good humour apparent in host and hostess, bride and bridegroom. Indeed, the universal jollity was so spontaneous and natural, and my satisfaction so unqualified, that I was astonished when the carriage which was to convey my wife and me to the depôt was announced, so pleasantly and fleetly had the time sped.

Our departure took place amid a chorus of good wishes and a shower of rice, whereof a certain handful was thrown by uncle Sam with such unerring dexterity that the greater part of it found its way down the back of my collar, and tickled me horribly in the region of the vertebræ until after we reached Saratoga.



### XXXIII

#### CONCLUSION.

Each mother's son has toil and care,  
To bow his head and bleach his hair.  
Fate deals her blows with partial touch—  
Little to some, to others much ;  
Yet not so great 'twixt these and those  
The difference as men suppose.  
The man whose cares come thick and fast,  
Shall find contentment at the last,  
With a tra la la.

It is the quality of happiness to present little or nothing to chronicle. My full, perfect, and complete contentment—in so far as such a desirable condition is ever permitted to a mortal—began with the events described in the last chapter, and continues to this day. Here, therefore, am I constrained to bring these memoirs to a close ; and I do so with feelings at once of relief and regret—relief at the accomplishment of a task which, though at first undertaken with no more serious intent than the beguilement of a leisure hour, soon assumed proportions too large for such desultory treatment, and regret (incidental, alas, to all humanity !) at my departing youth, in recalling the incidents of which I have in some sort lived again.

Uncle Sam has built for himself a palatial house in London, at Queen's Gate, Hyde Park, where he spends about six months of each year, broken by frequent though brief visits to Suffolk, for he and his brother are now closer friends than at any former period of their lives. On such occasions he stays



with my father, or with Constance and me—for the fine estate of Heronsmere, adjoining Holdenhurst, for centuries the home of the Jarvis family, is now mine, bankrupt tenants and derelict farms having forced Sir Thomas Jarvis to sell his ancestral hall and acres. I am afraid very little of the purchase-money remained for the use of the unfortunate baronet after he had cleared off the mortgages with which his property was encumbered; but with the remainder, whatever it was, he has betaken himself to South Africa to repair his shattered fortunes. Uncle Sam, who conducted my purchase of Heronsmere, has predicted that Sir Thomas will be in England again in three years, “returned empty,” like a merchant’s packing-case.

His resolution not to further engage in business has been strictly adhered to by uncle Sam; but his conduct is very erratic, and he crosses and recrosses the Atlantic at the most unexpected times, and has lost none of his old interest in government loans, treasury bills, and company promotion. Less rough in his allusions to subjects which many people regard with reverence—a change which some attribute to a more serious view of life induced by the tragedy with which he was so nearly concerned, and yet others to his natural urbanity being improved by a larger acquaintance with English society—uncle Sam is a general favourite, his company being at all times in great request, though hardly more so than that of the gentle lady his wife, whose amiability, large-hearted charity, and noble protection of the brilliant young imp known as “the cardinal” (to whom whatever of mischief in or around Holdenhurst is usually attributed), is the admiration of all who know her.

About three months after my marriage, my wife and I and aunt Gertrude and uncle Sam were enjoying a post-prandial stroll on the lawn at the rear of my house, speculating as to the day and hour of arrival at Liverpool of the *Majestic*, which steamer was to bring to England a party of our American friends *en route* for Heronsmere, when my father unexpectedly



appeared upon the scene, flushed by rapid walking, and with an amused smile upon his face.

"Have you heard the news?" asked my father unceremoniously, without even waiting to greet the ladies present.

"Yes," said uncle Sam, although the inquiry was not particularly addressed to him. "I sent specially to Bury this afternoon for to-day's *Times* (I couldn't wait for it till tomorrow), and have read it through, advertisements not excepted. The English people have certainly gone mad, and the House of Commons differs only from other asylums for the insane in respect of the ravings of its members being reported. Do you allude to the second reading of the Bill for the Abolition of the Navy, or to the proposed national endowment of a Professorship of Anarchism at the University of Oxford?"

"No, no," said my father; "the Rev. Mr Price is married."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed uncle Sam, turning on his heel.

"Who is the lady?" asked aunt Gertrude.

"Mrs Butterwell."

The cigar I was smoking fell from my lips, and I indulged in a loud and prolonged laugh.

"Isn't Mrs Price much older than her husband?" Constance inquired.

"Only forty-seven years," replied my father. "Major Armstrong has just told me all about it. Everybody is full of the news. Mr Price is now one of the richest men in the county."

"Poor devil!" exclaimed uncle Sam; "he deserves to be! Let no man trouble to revenge himself upon his enemies; leave them to their own devices, and they will themselves do all that is necessary."

After some harmless pleasantries at the expense of the Rev Mr Price and his bride, we leisurely re-entered the house.

"Connie, dear," I whispered, as we crossed the threshold of our new home, "I have often heard that love in a cottage is a failure, and I can well appreciate love's difficulties in that state; but though you possessed not the worth of a dollar and I



not the worth of a sequin, still I could be happy with you for my wife, labour for my portion, and one of those cottages in the lane for our home. In no circumstances could I have done what Price has done. It is too horrible even to contemplate."

"No, dear, I don't think you could," answered my faithful Connie; "but don't be too hard in your judgments. I have heard that money is a terrible temptation to those who possess none, and it has been your fate to acquire much of it in unusual ways. Only a few men marry millionaire girls; and fewer still, I fear, discover sequins in Suffolk."

THE END.

nothing could be more timely, nothing could be more charming than this exquisite book. A society novel by Mrs. Hall will excite widespread interest and curiosity. "Girls of a Feather" is the freshness of a May morning in its atmosphere and the form and color of June in its beautiful pictures of womanhood. It is a delightful successor to "The Bow of Orange Ribbon," and readers will find in it a lightness of touch and maturity of power which show the progress made by the author in the highest qualities of literary form. Her new work is distinctly an advance upon anything which she has ever done before, and will rank with the best literature of the period. Large new type is used, and the appearance of the book is very attractive.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the publishers.

ROBERT BONNER & SONS,  
107, WILLIAM AND SPRING STREETS, NEW YORK.



**An American Society Novel.**

---

# GIRLS OF A FEATHER.

BY

MRS. AMELIA E. BARR,

*Author of "The Beads of Tasmer," "The Mate of the 'Easter Bell,'" "Friend Olivia," "The Household of McNeil," "A Sister to Esau," etc.*

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY MEREDITH NUGENT.

12mo. 366 pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.25.  
Paper Cover, 50 Cents.

---

Nothing could be more timely, nothing could be more charming, than this exquisite book. A society novel by Mrs. Barr will excite widespread interest and curiosity. "Girls of a Feather" has the freshness of a May morning in its atmosphere and the form and color of June in its beautiful pictures of womanhood. It is a delightful successor to "The Bow of Orange Ribbon," and readers will find in it a lightness of touch and maturity of power which show the progress made by the author in the highest qualities of literary form. Her new work is distinctly an advance upon anything which she has ever done before, and will rank with the best literature of the period. Large, new type is used, and the appearance of the book is very attractive.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent, postpaid, on receipt of price, by the publishers,

ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,  
COR. WILLIAM AND SPRUCE STREETS, NEW YORK.



**An Exquisite Novel.**

---

# APPASSIONATA.

**A MUSICIAN'S STORY.**

BY

**ELSA D'ESTERRE-KEELING,**

*Author of "In Thoughtland and Dreamland," etc., etc.*

**WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAMES FAGAN.**

**12mo. 280 Pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.25.  
Paper Cover, 50 Cents.**

---

"Appassionata" is the story of a girl endowed with extraordinary genius and a passion for music. Her history is most romantic and interesting. Her love and her genius lead to strange situations. The novel is one which will interest all lovers of music, as they will appreciate the difficulties and emotions which sway the heroine. The illustrations of this novel by Mr. Fagan are extremely good, and the book is daintily bound. It is one of the prettiest books of the season.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent, postpaid, on receipt of price, by the publishers,

**ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,  
COR. WILLIAM AND SPRUCE STREETS, NEW YORK.**



**Mrs. Southworth's Best Novels.**

---

**ONLY A GIRL'S HEART,**

BY

**MRS. E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH.**

---

**THE REJECTED BRIDE,**

Being "Only a Girl's Heart," Second Series.

---

**GERTRUDE HADDON,**

Being "Only a Girl's Heart," Third Series.

---

BY

**MRS. E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH,**

---

*ALL THREE ILLUSTRATED BY HUGH M. EATON.*

**12mo. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.00 each. Paper Cover, 50 Cents.**

---

The three novels above named are all connected by a thread of story and deal with the same characters. The series reads continuously and is essentially one novel, although each book forms more or less a distinct narrative. The interest of the first novel is carried forward with increasing power until the close of the third. Few authors, living or dead, have swayed so wide an influence or held readers with a more sovereign power than this delightful novelist. Many readers are gratified to meet their old acquaintances in the successive books of a favorite author. F. Marion Crawford owes a great deal of his popularity to the Roman family of the Saracinesca, whose fortunes in succeeding generations are told in his novels. So this series by Mrs. Southworth will furnish a whole winter's reading to her admirers, and all about the same people. The illustrations of these novels add very much to their beauty and interest.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent, postpaid, on receipt of price, by the publishers,

**ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,  
COR. WILLIAM AND SPRUCE STREETS, NEW YORK.**



**A New Novel by the Author of "A Priestess  
of Comedy."**

---

# COUNTESS DYNAR;

OR,  
**POLISH BLOOD.**

BY

**NATALY VON ESCHSTRUTH,**

*Author of "A Priestess of Comedy," "A Princess of the Stage,"  
etc.*

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAMES FAGAN.

12mo. 367 Pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.25.  
Paper Cover, 50 Cents.

Nataly von Eschstruth's novels are full of romantic sentiment that takes one completely out of the ordinary atmosphere and situations of common life. There are a swing to her style, a contagious enthusiasm and extravagance in her descriptions and a freshness in the emotions and passions of her characters, which command the attention, excite the feelings and absorb the interest of every reader. All who have read the "Priestess of Comedy" will appreciate the truth of what we say. "Countess Dynar" is a book of most unusual beauty. The illustrations are admirably illustrative of the scenes and characters.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent, postpaid, on receipt of price, by the publishers,

**ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,  
COR. WILLIAM AND SPRUCE STREETS, NEW YORK.**



**An Interesting Novel.**

---

# **A SLEEP-WALKER.**

**A Novel.**

**BY**

**PAUL H. GERRARD.**

**ILLUSTRATED BY WARREN B. DAVIS.**

**12mo. 314 Pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.00.  
Paper Cover, 50 Cents.**

“A Sleep-Walker” is a novel of incident. As the title indicates, complications arise from the doings of a fair somnambulist. In the opening a mysterious woman is discovered in the act of throwing a child into a reservoir. The fate of the child and the identity of the woman are matters upon which the plot of the story turns. Much is involved, and a large number of persons interested, and a series of events transpire, all of which go to form a dramatic story of most sensational interest. The story is published simultaneously in England and this country and is well calculated to please readers in both countries.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent, postpaid, on receipt of price, by the publishers,

**ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,  
COR. WILLIAM AND SPRUCE STREETS, NEW YORK.**



**A New Novel by E. Werner.**

---

# A Lover From Across the Sea.

BY

**E. WERNER.**

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY

**MARY J. SAFFORD.**

*ILLUSTRATIONS BY VICTOR PERARD AND H. M. EATON.*

**12mo. 300 Pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.00.  
Paper Cover, 50 Cents.**

---

E. Werner is the author of more popular novels than any other German writer. She has set the key for a good many of her sisters, who have made the German domestic love-story one of the most agreeable and familiar to American readers. These stories are always pure, interesting and popular. "A Lover from Across the Sea" is a fresh story, never before translated, and better adapted for republication here than any German novel which we can recall. It is one of the author's shorter novels, and the volume is enlarged by the addition of another new story by E. Werner, entitled "In the Hands of the Enemy," of the same general character and equally interesting. The illustrations of these stories add very much to the value and beauty of the book.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent, postpaid, on receipt of price, by the publishers,

**ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,  
COR. WILLIAM AND SPRUCE STREETS, NEW YORK.**



**A New Novel by the Author of "A Priestess  
of Comedy."**

---

# A PRINCESS OF THE STAGE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

NATALY VON ESCHSTRUTH,

*Author of "A Priestess of Comedy," "Countess Dynar," etc.*

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAMES FAGAN.

12mo. 300 Pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.25.  
Paper Cover, 50 Cents.

---

In this story the author gives us both tragedy and comedy. The romantic love affair of the chamberlain of the czar excites the most thrilling interest, involving as it does such tragic consequences. There is a delightfully amusing side to the story in the love affair of Lena's sister, and that of her hoydenish, noisy little country cousin and a young dandy. The character of the prince is exceedingly well drawn, and the transformation of the hoyden into a refined and elegant young lady is most charming. Nothing that has been published from the pen of the Baroness von Eschstruth is better than this story. The illustrations by Mr. Fagan are excellent. The book is beautifully bound in cloth as well as in paper covers.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent, postpaid, on receipt of price, by the publishers,

ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,  
COR. WILLIAM AND SPRUCE STREETS, NEW YORK.



Julien Gordon's Novel from the German.

---

COUNTESS OBERNAU.

AFTER THE GERMAN

BY

JULIEN GORDON,

*Author of "A Diplomat's Diary," etc., etc.*

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAMES FAGAN.

12mo. 281 Pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.25.  
Paper Cover, 50 Cents.

Julien Gordon's novels possess superb studies of character and fresh and unhackneyed incidents—merits which have rendered them popular. These qualities will also be found in "Countess Obernau," which she has adapted from the German, and which is quite equal to any of her books. Countess Obernau is a woman who possesses a rare charm of individuality. She has refinement and exquisite sensibilities joined to an artistic temperament. There is a mystery in her life, and her independent character and Bohemian tendencies invest all her movements with interest to curious observers. The charm of her individuality fascinates all, and at least two are ready to die for her. The interest of the novel is all centered in this character.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent, postpaid, on receipt of price, by the publishers,

ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,  
COR. WILLIAM AND SPRUCE STREETS, NEW YORK.



A War Novel.

---

# THE GUN-BEARER.

BY

EDWARD A. ROBINSON

AND

GEORGE A. WALL,

*Authors of "The Disk," etc.*

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAMES FAGAN.

12mo. 276 Pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.25.  
Paper Cover, 50 Cents.

---

A new and thrilling war novel of intense interest, narrating the experiences of a *private soldier* whose regiment joins Sherman's army at Buzzard's Roost, and shares the fortunes of that army, participating in all the engagements up to the fall of Atlanta. Thence with General Schofield's command, pursued by General Hood into Tennessee, contesting the ground foot by foot, the regiment finally joins General Thomas at Nashville. The story culminates with the desperate battle of Franklin, where General Schofield, with ten thousand men, wrestled with General Hood and three times as many Confederates. Vivid descriptions of soldier life in camp, on the march, in bivouac, on picket, in skirmish and in battle, sustain the interest and hold the reader's attention to the end.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent, postpaid, on receipt of price, by the publishers,

ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,  
COR. WILLIAM AND SPRUCE STREETS, NEW YORK.



**A Fresh Novel From the German.**

---

# WOOING A WIDOW.

FROM THE GERMAN OF  
**EWALD AUGUST KOENIG.**

BY

**MARY A. ROBINSON,**  
*Translator of "A Child of the Parish," etc.*

**WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAMES FAGAN.**

**12mo. 880 Pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.25.**  
**Paper Cover, 50 Cents.**

---

Koenig is one of the most popular novelists of Germany, and "Wooing a Widow" is his best work. The widow in the story has more than one wooer, and there is great uncertainty as to the one ultimately to win and wed her. It is an exciting story, with a succession of interesting incidents in the working-out of an excellent plot. It is rare that we find a story from the German so well planned and so delightfully carried out. It can be read at one sitting without any feeling of fatigue, as the story is interesting from beginning to end.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent, postpaid, on receipt of price, by the publishers,

**ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,**  
**COR. WILLIAM AND SPRUCE STREETS, NEW YORK.**



**An Attractive Novel.**

# HER LITTLE HIGHNESS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

NATALY VON ESCHSTRUTH,

*Author of "A Priestess of Comedy," "Countess Dynar,"  
"A Princess of the Stage," etc., etc.*

BY

ELISE L. LATHROP.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAMES FAGAN.

**12mo. 303 Pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.25.  
Paper Cover, 50 Cents.**

"Her Little Highness" is Baroness Eschstruth's latest book and one of the most charming novels that has come from her pen. The little princess, who is the heroine of the story, is the heir of a ducal throne, which in Germany makes her a being apart from the rest of the world, which tends to heighten the piquancy of a being so very human and so very natural. Her little highness is a little woman from the top of her head to the tips of her toes, and her love of Valleral, a gay and frolicsome courtier, is the most natural thing in the world. However unsuitable for the husband of a princess Valleral may be, the reader of the novel will enjoy the situation that the love affair creates. Valleral is a widower, with a son almost as old as the princess, and as sober as the father is frivolous. The little princess's fate is bound up with these two, and we could not detail all the complications in their relations without depriving the reader of the pleasure of following out for himself a most interesting love story.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent, postpaid on receipt of price, by the publishers,

ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,

COR. WILLIAM AND SPRUCE STREETS, NEW YORK.



**An Original Story of Adventure.**

---

# **IN THE CHINA SEA.**

**BY**

**SEWARD W. HOPKINS,**

*Author of "Two Gentlemen of Hawaii," etc., etc.*

**WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY PRUETT SHARR AND H. M. EATON.**

**12mo. 300 Pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.00.  
Paper Cover, 50 Cents.**

---

"In the China Sea" is a story of the Pacific Coast, where the almond-eyed Mongolians have a quarter in every city, whence they communicate with their kindred of the Flowery Kingdom across the seas. The story deals with the disappearance of a beautiful girl, who is traced to Portland, Oregon, where she is embarked on a steamer bound for China. There is an exciting pursuit and search for this beautiful girl. The extraordinary things which happen, the sights and people met with and described, in detailing this pursuit and search, render this story one of the most interesting and exciting productions of modern fiction. It will rank with "King Solomon's Mines" and Jules Verne's wonderful narrations. An unknown people of strange customs, manners and appearance is introduced. A great war is started, carried on and brought to a conclusion. The invention of the author seems to be boundless, and the interest of the reader is stimulated by the new and wonderful developments that crowd upon one another as the story proceeds.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent, postpaid on receipt of price, by the publishers,

**ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,**

**COR. WILLIAM AND SPRUCE STREETS, NEW YORK.**



**An Excellent New Novel.**

---

# INVISIBLE HANDS.

AFTER THE GERMAN OF  
**F. VON ZOBELTITZ,**

BY  
**S. E. BOGGS,**  
*Translator of "The Little Countess," etc.*

**WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAMES FAGAN.**

**12mo. 372 Pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.25.**  
**Paper Cover, 50 Cents.**

This is a most excellent novel. The incidents are natural and probable, although uncommon; and the admirable plot is based on transactions in Berlin and in Italy, both German and Italian characters figuring in it. It is rare that anything so powerful and dramatic comes to us in the form of German fiction. The story is intensely interesting, constantly gaining as new characters and fresh incidents are introduced in the working-out of the plot. The character of the Italian lawyer is worthy of the times of Machiavelli. It presents a lovely picture of German family life, and the female characters represent all that is charming in girlhood and womanhood. This is a novel which everybody can read with pleasure and profit.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent, postpaid, on receipt of price, by the publishers,

**ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,**  
**COR. WILLIAM AND SPRUCE STREETS, NEW YORK.**



# Yet She Loved Him,

By Mrs. Kate Vaughn,

— AND —

# Jephthah's Daughter,

By Julia Magruder,

*Author of "A Magnificent Plebeian," "At Anchor,"  
"Honored in the Breach," etc.*

**With Illustrations by Warren B. Davis.**

**12mo. 339 Pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.00.  
Paper Cover, 50 Cents.**

"Yet She Loved Him" is a popular and sensational story of English life. It has many elements of interest, and will please all readers to whom a good story is the principal thing in a novel. Miss Magruder's novelette, "Jephthah's Daughter," which is appended, is of a distinctly higher character. It is based upon the Biblical narrative, and is written in a style peculiarly appropriate to the subject, and full of beauty. The story is a brilliant piece of work. Nothing which Miss Magruder has written exhibits greater literary ability or more sustained power.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent, postpaid, on receipt of price, by the publishers,

**ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,**

**Cor. William and Spruce Streets, New York.**



A Novel by Fanny Lewald.

---

# The Mask of Beauty.

AFTER THE GERMAN OF  
Fanny Lewald,

BY  
Mary M. Pleasants.

With Illustrations by F. A. Carter.

12mo. 340 Pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.00.  
Paper Cover, 50 Cents.

---

Fanny Lewald is one of the most celebrated writers of Germany. Her books have enjoyed great popularity, but few of them have been translated into English. This is a story of Hela, a peninsula jutting out into the Baltic Sea, of which Dantzig is the principal town. The maid of Hela is a poor orphan, whose rare beauty is the cause of her many trials. She is bred in a fishing village among a superstitious people, full of curiosity, and isolated from her neighbors by reason of her parentage and religion. The story is a minute and realistic study of character, manners and customs of an out-of-the-way corner of the world. The extraordinary beauty of the girl Catherine, whose life history is narrated, is made the cause of every important situation and the final tragedy of the novel. Nothing can be finer than the patient and loving art with which the author has developed her subject, and exhibited beauty as the mask of a pure and beautiful soul unconscious of the dangerous possession.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent, postpaid, on receipt of price, by the publishers,

**ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,**

Cor. William and Spruce Streets, New York.



A New Novel by the Author of "In the China Sea."

---

# Two Gentlemen of Hawaii

BY

**Seward W. Hopkins,**

*Author of "In the China Sea," etc.*

**With Illustrations by M. Colin.**

**12mo. 244 Pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.00.  
Paper Cover, 50 Cents.**

---

This novel deals with the revolution in the Hawaiian Islands. It takes the part of the revolutionists. It gives a complete account of the exciting events, beginning with the deposition of Queen Liliuokalani, the institution of the provisional government under President Dole and the offer of the islands to the United States. It is a thrilling picture of a period of intrigue, danger and revolutionary violence. Most of the characters are Americans concerned in the revolution, and the story is written from the point of view of a partisan who believes that the peace and prosperity of the islands are bound up with the new movement. It is a lively and interesting tale, full of sensation, with a vivid picture of the scenery and life of the islands and of the fatal malady with which the natives are afflicted. The terrors of leprosy are described. The superstitions of the Islanders and the volcanic eruptions on the Island of Lanai form a tragic background to the story. At the present time, when public attention is engaged by the events transpiring in these islands, this novel has an especial attractiveness.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent, postpaid, on receipt of price, by the publishers,

**ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,**

**Cor. William and Spruce Streets, New York.**



A Story of the French Revolution.

---

# The Shadow of the Guillotine.

BY

Sylvanus Cobb, Jr.,

*Author of "The Gunmaker of Moscow," "The  
Outcast of Milan," "Blanche of  
Burgundy," etc., etc.*

**With Illustrations by Warren B. Davis.**

**12mo. 429 Pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.00.  
Paper Cover, 50 Cents.**

This is an interesting and thrilling novel. Like all of Mr. Cobb's works, it is interesting as a story from the beginning, dealing with historical scenes and events of one of the most exciting epochs of modern times. The French Revolution was the first great outbreak of the people against hereditary power and privilege. The ideas of liberty and equality and government by the people, which were its active principle, were obscured and caricatured in the sanguinary tumult and riot into which the movement degenerated under the leadership of Robespierre and his companions. Through this tempest of fire and blood Mr. Cobb takes his readers, and fastens their attention while portraying the charming and manly characters whose story he tells. The thousands who have read "The Gunmaker of Moscow" will enjoy this novel.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the publishers,

**ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,**

**Cor. William and Spruce Streets, New York.**



**Story of a French Millionaire.**

---

# **Mystery of Hotel Brichet.**

AFTER THE FRENCH OF

**Eugene Chavette.**

**With Illustrations by James Fagan.**

**12mo. 358 Pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.00.  
Paper Cover, 50 Cents.**

---

This is a French novel the scene of which is Paris of the last century. The great robber Cartouche on his trial betrays his associates, and it is through one implicated by his testimony that the author introduces the history of the House of Brichet. Truth is said to be stranger than fiction, but the story of the galley-slave who escapes from Toulon to figure as the possessor of millions in the capital of France will compare favorably with anything that ever happened in the world of reality. It is seldom that a novel filled with exciting incidents is so entirely consistent from beginning to end and which gains in interest as the plot develops. The novel has something of the spirit and "go" of Alexander Dumas's famous guardsman series, the most amusing character being a guardsman, a swordsman and a duelist.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the publishers,

**ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,  
Cor. William and Spruce Streets, New York.**



An Historical Novel.

---

# Blanche of Burgundy.

BY

Sylvanus Cobb, Jr.,

*Author of "The Gunmaker of Moscow," etc.*

With Illustrations by H. M. Eaton.

12mo. 419 Pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.00.  
Paper Cover, 50 Cents.

---

"Blanche of Burgundy" is a novel based upon incidents and scenes of a most interesting period of French history. It is the time of Charles the Ninth. The realm is divided into twelve great baronies or fiefs, the heads of which are princes almost independent, owing military service and tribute to their sovereign. Charles has departed from France on the great mission of the Crusaders to rescue Palestine from the Moslem. The Duke of Burgundy, father of Blanche, is about to embark with his army for Egypt to join the king, but, before doing so, he awaits the marriage of his daughter, the beautiful Blanche, to Gregory of Franche Comte. The latter proves a difficult subject, and the complications which ensue make a highly interesting novel.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the publishers,

**ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,**  
Cor. William and Spruce Streets, New York.



A Fresh German Translation.

---

# THE OPPOSITE HOUSE.

AFTER THE GERMAN OF

**Nataly von Eschstruth,**

*Author of "A priestess of Comedy," "A Princess of the Stage," "Her Little Highness,"  
"Countess Dynar," etc., etc.*

**With Illustrations by H. M. Eaton.**

**12mo. 282 Pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.00.  
Paper Cover, 50 Cents.**

---

Nataly von Eschstruth's latest novel is a romantic love story, full of interesting situations, diversity of character and thrilling episodes, all subsidiary to a well-constructed and carefully developed plot. The heroine is a lovely countess of proud and ancient family. The hero of the story is a manufacturer and belongs to the trading class, which in Germany is distinctly below the nobility. He throws up his business and takes an active part in the Franco-German War, and on the field of battle shows that there is quite as much nobility in the Prince of the Mill as in the titular princes of the court. We withhold the climax of the story, not wishing to dull the appetite and enjoyment of the reader. This forms one of the best volumes in the Ledger Library series of German translations.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the publishers,

**ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,**

**Cor. William and Spruce Streets, New York.**



Mrs. Barr's New Novel.

---

# The Flower of Gala Water.

BY

Amelia E. Barr,

*Author of "Girls of a Feather," "The Bow of Orange Ribbon," "Friend Olivia," "The Beads of Tasmer," "The Mate of the 'Easter Bell,'" "Mrs. Barr's Short Stories," etc., etc.*

With Illustrations by Charles Kendrick.

12mo. 400 Pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Uniform with "Girls of a Feather." Price, \$1.25. Paper Cover, 50 Cents.

---

"The Flower of Gala Water" is one of Mrs. Barr's most delightful novels of Scottish life and scenery. In her portrayal of Scotch character and manners she has no superior among contemporary writers. Her heroines are vital with love and feminine qualities, and possess an individuality which is charming. They have the freshness of youth and health, and impart to her pages their own attractiveness. Mrs. Barr's fine sentiment and vigor of conviction have ample expression in her latest novel. No one can read it without having every noble feeling vitalized and exalted. It is this moral quality which renders "The Flower of Gala Water" a book to be placed in the hands of every boy and every girl.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the publishers,

**ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,**

Cor. William and Spruce Streets, New York.



Heimburg's New Novel.

---

# FOR ANOTHER'S WRONG

AFTER THE GERMAN OF

W. Heimburg,

*Author of "Miss Mischief," "An Insignificant Woman," etc., etc.*

AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION

BY

A. W. AYER and H. T. SLATE.

With Illustrations by James Fagan.

12mo. 358 Pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.25.  
Paper Cover, 50 Cents.

---

Heimburg's new novel is an intensely interesting love story. It is based on the sentiments and emotions which fill so large a place in the lives of women, and, therefore, appeals strongly to their sympathies. In reading of these imaginary lovers many will find parallel experiences in their own lives. The story has a romantic plot, and the incidents are calculated to enhance the interest. This is one of Heimburg's best novels.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the publishers,

**ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,**

Cor. William and Spruce Streets, New York.



A New Story by the Author of "Two Gentlemen  
of Hawaii."

---

# On a False Charge.

BY

Seward W. Hopkins,

*Author of "Two Gentlemen of Hawaii," "In  
the China Sea," etc., etc.*

**With Illustrations by H. M. Eaton.**

12mo. 340 Pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.00.  
Paper Cover, 50 Cents.

---

"On a False Charge" is an exciting story of the great strike in the Pennsylvania coal mines, setting forth thrilling scenes and incidents and showing how the mining population are often the victims of unscrupulous and grasping agents. The facts of this story are true to life, and the scenes portrayed are taken directly from nature. The romantic interest which centers in the heroine is unsurpassed in any recent American work of fiction. Mr. Hopkins has a lively and entertaining style, and his book is one that will please every reader of his former novels.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the publishers,

**ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,**

**Cor. William and Spruce Streets, New York.**



A Novel of Strange Adventures.

---

# A Treasure Found== A Bride Won

BY

George E. Gardner.

With Illustrations by Warren B. Davis.

12mo. 407 Pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.00.  
Paper Cover, 50 Cents.

---

This novel is a record of adventure in the Eastern seas, full of strange incidents and dangers, exciting profound interest. There is good descriptive work in the story, and it well repays perusal for the pictures of the life and scenery of the ocean. There is a story in it which grips attention at the start, and never relaxes its hold upon the reader until the end. The author has made good in this work his right to be numbered among the popular authors who introduce us to new and captivating fields of action. The world is becoming so narrow and well-travelled that our best writers enlarge its borders by the aid of imagination, and this faculty is the secret of their charm.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the publishers,

**ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,**  
Cor. William and Spruce Streets, New York.



A Woman's Book.

---

# The House by the River.

BY

**Barbara Kent.**

**With Illustrations by Warren B. Davis.**

**12mo. 328 Pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.00.  
Paper Cover, 50 Cents.**

---

"The House by the River" is a woman's book from beginning to end. It is an interesting novel, with the principal scenes in the city of New York and in familiar localities. In the opening of the story there is a strong dramatic recital of events upon which the plot hinges, and which give a deep and thrilling interest to the development of the romance of two young lives. The vindictiveness of a man who has been compelled to do right under humiliating circumstances gives a strong motive to the whole action of the story. Every reader will be gratified by the way in which the conclusion is reached.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the publishers,

**ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,**

**Cor. William and Spruce Streets, New York.**



A New Novel.

---

# At a Great Cost.

BY

**Effie Adelaide Rowlands,**

*Author of "Little Kit," "My Pretty Jane," etc.*

**With Illustrations by Harry C. Edwards.**

12mo. 348 Pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.00.  
Paper Cover, 50 Cents.

---

"At a Great Cost" is a novel of the same popular character as "Molly Bawn," by The Duchess. It is thoroughly interesting as a story. Every reader will be delighted with it. The young English girl who is the heroine is like Wordsworth's "Dora,"

A creature not too bright or good  
For human nature's daily food.

A lovely and charming woman who fills the ideal of a sweetheart and bride, and the pleasant beginning raises expectations in the reader which are not disappointed in the conclusion. We recommend it to all novel readers.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the publishers,

**ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,**

**Cor. William and Spruce Streets, New York.**



# THE CHOICE SERIES.

NO. AND TITLE.	AUTHOR.	CLOTH	PAPER
1—A Mad Betrothal.....	Laura Jean Libbey.....	\$1.00	50 cts
2—Henry M. Stanley.....	Henry Frederick Reddall.....	1.00	50
3—Her Double Life.....	Mrs. Harriet Lewis.....	1.00	50
4—Unknown.....	Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth.....	1.00	50
5—The Gunmaker of Moscow.....	Sylvanus Cobb, Jr.....	1.00	50
6—Maud Morton.....	Major A. R. Calhoun.....	1.00	50
7—The Hidden Hand.....	Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth.....	1.00	50
8—Sundered Hearts.....	Mrs. Harriet Lewis.....	1.00	50
9—The Stone-Cutter of Lisbon.....	Prof. Wm. Henry Peck.....	1.00	50
10—Lady Kildare.....	Mrs. Harriet Lewis.....	1.00	50
11—Cris Rock.....	Captain Mayne Reid.....	1.00	50
12—Nearest and Dearest.....	Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth.....	1.00	50
13—The Bailiff's Scheme.....	Mrs. Harriet Lewis.....	1.00	50
14—A Leap in the Dark.....	Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth.....	1.00	50
15—The Old Life's Shadows.....	Mrs. Harriet Lewis.....	1.00	50
16—The Lost Lady of Lone.....	Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth.....	1.00	50
17—Ione.....	Laura Jean Libbey.....	1.00	50
18—For Woman's Love.....	Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth.....	1.00	50
19—Cesar Birotteau.....	Honore De Balzac.....	1.00	50
20—The Baroness Blank.....	August Niemann.....	1.00	50
21—Parted by Fate.....	Laura Jean Libbey.....	1.00	50
22—The Forsaken Inn.....	Anna Katharine Green.....	1.50	50
23—Otti'e Aster's Silence.....	Mrs. D. M. Lowrey.....	1.00	50
24—Edda's Birthright.....	Mrs. Harriet Lewis.....	1.00	50
25—The Alchemist.....	Honore De Balzac.....	1.00	50
26—Under Oath.....	Jean Kate Ludlum.....	1.00	50
27—Cousin Pons.....	Honore De Balzac.....	1.00	50
28—The Unloved Wife.....	Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth.....	1.00	50
29—Lilith.....	" " ".....	1.00	50
30—Reunited.....	A Popular Southern Author.....	1.00	50
31—Mrs. Harold Stagg.....	Robert Grant.....	1.00	50
32—The Breach of Custom.....	Mrs. D. M. Lowrey. (Translator).....	1.00	50
33—The Northern Light.....	E. Werner.....	1.00	50
34—Beryl's Husband.....	Mrs. Harriet Lewis.....	1.00	50
35—A Love Match.....	Sylvanus Cobb, Jr.....	1.00	50
36—A Matter of Millions.....	Anna Katharine Green.....	1.50	50
37—Eugenie Grandet.....	Honore De Balzac.....	1.00	50
38—The Improvisatore.....	Hans Christian Andersen.....	1.00	50
39—Paoli, the Warrior Bishop.....	W. C. Kitchin.....	1.00	50
40—Under a Cloud.....	Jean Kate Ludlum.....	1.00	50
41—Wife and Woman.....	Mary J. Safford.....	1.00	50
42—An Insignificant Woman.....	W. Heimburg.....	1.00	50
43—The Carletons.....	Robert Grant.....	1.00	50
44—Mademoiselle Desroches.....	Andre Theuriet.....	1.00	50
45—The Beads of Tasmer.....	Mrs. Amelia E. Barr.....	1.25	50
46—John Winthrop's Defeat.....	Jean Kate Ludlum.....	1.00	50
47—Little Heather-Blossom.....	Mary J. Safford. (Translator).....	1.00	50
48—Gloria.....	Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth.....	1.00	50
49—David Lindsay.....	" " ".....	1.00	50
50—The Little Countess.....	S. E. Boggs. (Translator).....	1.00	50
51—The Chautauquans.....	John Habberton.....	1.25	50
52—The Two Husbands.....	Mrs. Harriet Lewis.....	1.00	50
53—Mrs. Barr's Short Stories.....	Mrs. Amelia E. Barr.....	1.25	50
54—We Parted at the Altar.....	Laura Jean Libbey.....	1.00	50
55—Was She Wife or Widow?.....	Malcolm Bell.....	1.00	50
56—The Country Doctor.....	Honore De Balzac.....	1.00	50
57—Florabel's Lover.....	Laura Jean Libbey.....	1.00	50
58—Lida Campbell.....	Jean Kate Ludlum.....	1.00	50
59—Edith Trevor's Secret.....	Mrs. Harriet Lewis.....	1.00	50
60—Cecil Rosse.....	" " ".....	1.00	50
61—Love is Lord of All.....	From the German.....	1.00	50
62—True Daughter of Hartenstein.....	" " ".....	1.00	50
63—Zina's Awakening.....	Mrs. J. Kent Spender.....	1.00	50
64—Morris Julian's Wife.....	Elizabeth Olmis.....	1.00	50
65—Dear Elsie.....	From the German.....	1.00	50
66—The Hungarian Girl.....	" " ".....	1.00	50
67—Beatrix Rohan.....	Mrs. Harriet Lewis.....	1.00	50
68—A Son of Old Harry.....	Albion W. Tourgee.....	1.50	50
69—Romance of Trouville.....	Brehat.....	1.00	50
70—Life of General Jackson.....	Oliver Dyer.....	1.00	50
71—The Return of the O'Mahony.....	Harold Frederic.....	1.50	50
72—Reuben Foreman, the Village Blacksmith.....	Darley Dale.....	1.00	50
73—Neva's Three Lovers.....	Mrs. Harriet Lewis.....	1.00	50
74—"Em".....	Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth.....	1.00	50
75—"Em's" Husband.....	" " ".....	1.00	50



## THE CHOICE SERIES==Continued.

NO. AND TITLE.	AUTHOR	CLOTH	PAPER
76—The Haunted Husband.....	Mrs. Harriet Lewis.....	1.00	50
77—The Siberian Exiles.....	Col. Thomas W. Knox.....	2.00	50
78—The Spanish Treasure.....	Elizabeth C. Winter.....	1.00	50
79—The King of Honey Island.....	Maurice Thompson.....	1.50	50
80—Mate of the "Easter Bell".....	Mrs. Amelia E. Barr.....	1.25	50
81—The Child of the Parish.....	Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach.....	1.00	50
82—Miss Mischief.....	W. Heimburg.....	1.50	50
83—The Honor of a Heart.....	From the German.....	1.00	50
84—Transgressing the Law.....	Capt. Frederick Whittaker.....	1.00	50
85—Hearts and Coronets.....	Jane G. Fuller.....	1.00	50
86—Tressilian Court.....	Mrs. Harriet Lewis.....	1.00	50
87—Guy Tressilian's Fate.....	" " ".....	1.00	50
88—Mynheer Joe.....	St. George Rathborne.....	1.00	50
89—The Froler Case.....	From the French by H. O. Cooke.....	1.00	50
90—A Priestess of Comedy.....	Nataly von Eschstruth.....	1.25	50
91—All or Nothing.....	Count Nepomuk Czapski.....	1.25	50
92—A Skeleton in the Closet.....	Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth.....	1.00	50
93—Brandon Coyle's Wife.....	" " ".....	1.00	50
94—Love.....	Honore De Balzac.....	1.00	50
95—The Tell-Tale Watch.....	From the German.....	1.00	50
96—Hetty; or the Old Grudge.....	J. H. Connelly.....	1.00	50
97—Girls of a Feather.....	Mrs. Amelia E. Barr.....	1.25	50
98—Appassionata.....	Elsa D'Esterre-Keeling.....	1.25	50
99—Only a Girl's Heart.....	Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth.....	1.00	50
100—The Rejected Bride.....	" " ".....	1.00	50
101—Gertrude Haddon.....	" " ".....	1.00	50
102—Countess Dynar, or Polish Blood.....	Nataly von Eschstruth.....	1.25	50
103—A Sleep-Walker.....	Paul H. Gerrard.....	1.00	50
104—A Lover From Across the Sea and Other Stories.....	E. Werner.....	1.00	50
105—A Princess of the Stage.....	Nataly von Eschstruth.....	1.25	50
106—Countess Obernau.....	Julien Gordon.....	1.25	50
107—The Gun-Bearer.....	E. A. Robinson and G. A. Wall.....	1.25	50
108—Wooing a Widow.....	Ewald August Koenig.....	1.25	50
109—Her Little Highness.....	Nataly von Eschstruth.....	1.25	50
110—In the China Sea.....	Seward W. Hopkins.....	1.00	50
111—Invisible Hands.....	F. von Zobeltitz.....	1.25	50
112—Yet She Loved Him.....	Mrs. Kate Vaughn.....	1.00	50
113—The Mask of Beauty.....	Fanny Lewald.....	1.00	50
114—Two Gentlemen of Hawaii.....	Seward W. Hopkins.....	1.00	50
115—The Shadow of the Guillotine.....	Sylvanus Cobb, Jr.....	1.00	50
116—Mystery of Hotel Brichet.....	Eugene Chavette.....	1.00	50
117—Blanche of Burgundy.....	Sylvanus Cobb, Jr.....	1.00	50
118—The Opposite House.....	Nataly von Eschstruth.....	1.00	50
119—The Flower of Gala Water.....	Mrs. Amelia E. Barr.....	1.25	50
120—For Another's Wrong.....	W. Heimburg.....	1.25	50
121—On a False Charge.....	Seward W. Hopkins.....	1.00	50
122—A Treasure Found—A Bride Won.....	George E. Gardner.....	1.00	50
123—The House by the River.....	Barbara Kent.....	1.00	50
124—At a Great Cost.....	Effie Adelaide Rowlands.....	1.00	50

Every Number Beautifully Illustrated.

DEC 29 1945 ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,

Publishers,

Cor. William and Spruce Sts., New York City.















LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0002224064A